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New American Frontiers

A Plan for Permanent Recovery

RICHARD B. RANSOM

[EDITORIAL NOTE.—*Apart from a discussion of the intrinsic merits of the programme which Mr. Ransom here so ably presents, it may be worth while to call attention to several points of special value which the article has for those who, following most of the contributors to* THE AMERICAN REVIEW *who have discussed economics, hope to see the present economic order superseded by a different one rather than given a new lease on life. First, Mr. Ransom's article serves to bring out vividly the one factor essential to any revival of the system called capitalism: namely, foreign trade. Foreign trade has been the life-blood of capitalism since its beginning: capitalism, foreign trade, imperialism, and plutocracy have thus far been synonymous. Second, the article makes manifest the* transience *of capitalism and the ultimate failure of any attempt to prolong it: since "foreign trade" in the capitalist sense means exchange between primarily agricultural and primarily industrial countries: an arrangement which must come to an end when all the countries become industrialized—if they do not sooner choose to return to agrarianism. This latter choice, in the third place, Mr.*

Ransom's piece clearly poses as worthy of consideration, if one holds that statesmanship calls for permanent solutions rather than the bequeathing of problems to our children. And finally, Mr. Ransom's presentation has the inestimable advantage, for distributists and agrarians, of indicating, as clearly as has been done anywhere, the next step which capitalism in this country will almost certainly take. There can be little doubt that we will witness a strenuous attempt to use the South American countries as this country and others were used by England throughout the nineteenth century; and there is every likelihood of some measure of success. Toward this development distributists and agrarians will have to take a decisive position in the next few years, whether of welcome or hostility.]

WHEN some future Ingersoll lectures on the Mistakes of Roosevelt, he will doubtless note the President's brilliant performance in riding the two horses of Recovery and Reform in simultaneously opposite directions. But the faithful will ask if there is not some higher relativity in politics such that the apparent diversion of paths is wholly illusory; and do they not finally reach the same goal?

The plan that I have in mind for a permanent recovery is very frankly opportunistic in its presentation, and intends to compromise the immediate necessities of recovery and reform into a single philosophy of long-term political action. In my vocabulary permanence is wholly relative, covering perhaps the next fifty to one hundred years, and allows to any more distant American future its own problems, its discretions, and its peculiar preferences. The scheme supposes that we cannot consent to the immediate abandonment or gradual attrition of any of the major accomplishments of the present order, but must devise some means to secure an extensive and fairly long-lived recovery under the present rules of the game. During the extended period of that recovery the plan proposes that the surplus energy of our society shall re-direct those forces in the political and economic systems that have become destructive of human liberty or of economic security. My own personal prejudices incline me to an arrangement that will function within the broad scope of our present national constitution, and will strengthen and define the private ownership of property.

The outlines of such a complete programme may be summarized within a very few items, each capable of individual justification or amendment, but each also designed to strengthen and re-enforce the plan as a whole. They are:

1. *Expansion of American economic frontiers.*
2. *Definition of private and corporate economies.*
3. *Limitations on wealth, both cumulative and selective.*
4. *Unification and public control of the system of debt.*
5. *Definition of the fields of local and national taxation.*
6. *Economic stability through extension of the governmental services.*

A part of these intentions are very old, some of them are new; but all are sufficiently novel in their group association to require a considered presentation and explanation.

In the latter part of 1933 when I first examined the relationships of Brazil and of the United States as supporting the possibilities of a new and interesting form of co-operation between governments and peoples, I summarized the conclusions reached under the title "A New American Expansion".* This expressed in a double sense both the most logical and most nearly certain means for recovery of the United States and the pattern of an association within which the independent nations of the two Americas might finally develop a more permanent prosperity. That analysis assumed that the war debts would never be paid, that the allocation of the world's commerce into more and more tightly closed international compartments would continue, and that the major European and Asiatic nations would continue their appropriation and diversion of the yet undeveloped fields of colonization and world trade. These conjectures have been continuously and more than amply confirmed. It is clear that there is no present likelihood of any general and lasting world peace. Perhaps on this account American public opinion would vigorously reject the prospect of any future entanglement with European political systems, and it quite as strongly objects to any fixed policy by which American interests are to be projected into the political development of the far East.

Events of the past eighteen months have also clarified the internal situation. The United States does not now fear any immediate or complete liquidation of the economic losses which we have in reality already incurred. We have developed depression techniques in relief and in the use of government credit which seem to defer a full accounting to some indefinite future. Although still economically pressed and uneasy, we are now able to appropriate some leisure to consideration of more permanent policies.

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* *The Southwest Review*, October, 1933.

There are several possibilities by which the United States alone or in connection with other nations may come out of the depression. Some of these possibilities are reasoned and consecutive, some are highly adventitious.

To begin with the present political situation, we may continue to drift and to hope. Mr. Roosevelt's programme does precisely that. The drift is evidently toward a vast indiscriminate collectivism, or toward an increasing and unplanned intrusion of government into the control of business and private enterprise. That national drift may be only an eddy in the immediate necessities of the depression, but whether it is only that or is something much more significant, the New Deal programme of recovery has given neither chart nor direction to our motion. The Administration's hopefulness is particularly ardent and sometimes particularly ineffective where it confuses measures of recovery with social reforms. In effect the reform programme has used our very lack of progress to reach out for various social benefits that could be reached without too dangerously rocking the boat. It is quite true that Mr. Roosevelt's leadership has indeed been invaluable during the past two years, but its total accomplishment has only made drifting more tolerable and has kept us from turning over.

For what eventuality does the President hope? I do not think that he precisely knows, but he hopes. Perhaps there will be a slow acceleration toward a more productive national mind, and recovery will finally be reached by gradual motion and unawares. Perhaps some great invention will suddenly push back the boundaries of civilized life, and business will be stimulated to expand again into more widely profitable fields. Perhaps there will be another world war outside which we shall stand to profit by the destructive loss of other systems of world production. Or perhaps there is indeed some inevitable rhythm of prosperity and depression such that we shall surely come again to high tide, but this time fortified against another ebb by the favorable private Providence of the New Deal.

To a radical mind I suppose that the occasional success of an opportunistic and drifting policy must be highly exasperating and against all orderly rules of reckoning. To a conservative, Mr. Roosevelt's social reforms mark him as a dangerous man and a disturber of business confidence. To me the President's programme appears too uncertain of any definite or permanent results; no end of experimentation is in sight; the odds do not make it a good gamble.

As a decidedly second choice, or perhaps after a more extended experience with the anxieties of hopeful drifting, the United States may undertake a vigorous self-sufficiency within its own borders. We may raise tariff walls still higher and diminish foreign trade by embargoes and restrictive allotments. We may build an immensely stronger navy, both insuring our own armed isolation and absorbing a fraction of our technological under-employment. We may ration new business enterprise and compose the competition of established concerns. We may insure and distribute employment by vast public works and expanded governmental service. We may even gradually limit individual desires and fashion simpler programmes of group satisfactions. It is entirely possible that in time we may thus develop a stable and entirely self-contained national life that will conserve an ample measure of material well-being. To do so, however, we must submit to rule and regulation. We shall exchange initiative for security, and shall entrust that security to the administration of a vast central bureaucracy; and we must inevitably and finally give over to some central dictator the full control over our material and political fortunes.

There is still a third choice, that of a planned economic expansion. I have already assumed that we do not desire merely to revive a business activity that may come again to another and perhaps more desperate end. We may indeed expect that measure of recovery from our national optimism and the undirected forces of human resiliency, granted that we have already passed the nether peak of the shifting economic diagram.

But we desire much more than this; something more extensive, more permanent, and better balanced; a recovery so expansive that it will furnish the means for reform without too great shock to the political and social system. American expansions of such magnitude in the past have invariably been conditioned on the development of revolutionary new inventions, the conclusion of successful wars, or the realization of new frontiers for the national occupation. Either of these may again produce that result. The accomplishment of revolutionary new invention and the successful prosecution of major wars are each highly hazardous and uncertain, but new economic frontiers may be explored with a greater assurance.

II

The internal economic system of the United States has several determinative characteristics that in their total combination are novel and historically peculiar. Over a wide expanse of territory and with an immense population of varied interests, our citizens enjoy an unrestricted freedom of movement, equality of the rights of person and property, whether in the citizen's own state or in another, the absence of all trade barriers between sections and states, and a uniform monetary system. Can not these characteristics of the American scene be reciprocally extended to other friendly nations without danger of territorial expansion or purely political involvement? The terms of a treaty which might formally mark the accomplishment of such an agreement may readily be determined. Suppose that they are as follows:

First, the citizens of each nation subscribing to this compact shall be free to enter, reside or travel within, or leave the territories of the several contracting nations without interference of passport or other regulations not required by each contracting nation of its own citizens; and such regulations as may exist within any contracting nation shall apply without discrimination to the citizens of each nation alike. Citizens of either contracting nation shall have the right to engage in trade or agriculture, to own property, and to resort to the courts for the protection of personal and property rights on terms of entire equality under the laws of each contracting nation.

Second, beginning with the ratification of this compact, all import and export duties of each contracting nation shall be reduced by 25% of their present rates as applying to imports or exports originating within either of the contracting nations and terminating within the other. Annually thereafter such import and export duties shall be further reduced by not less than 12½% of their present rates until all import and export duties shall be entirely abolished as between the several contracting nations. This provision shall not apply to imports or exports whose continuity is broken by re-shipment or entry through the territory of any intermediate nation; and the contracting nations agree that the provisions of this compact shall not operate to allow goods or products originating outside the territories of the several contracting nations to be in effect imported into any one of them through another, and on such importations these scheduled tariff reductions shall not apply.

Third, within a term of one year after the ratification of the compact, the executive departments of the several contracting nations shall determine upon a suitable ratio of parity between their several national currencies, and shall thereafter use such means as may jointly seem advisable to maintain the agreed parity during the effective life of the compact.

Fourth, either contracting nation shall have full right and privilege to withdraw from any or all articles of this compact at any time. Such withdrawal shall be effective after a term of two years' notice; or in respect to the tariff provisions of the compact, withdrawal shall be by a reversal of the steps by which import and export duties had previously been reduced.

As I have suggested them, the provisions of the compact are quite evidently more inclusive than the terms of any existing trade or tariff treaty, yet they do not confer any political rights, and leave the independence of each contracting nation wholly unimpaired. The compact does not involve an exclusive relationship. That is, it may be entered into by any two or by any number of national governments, and at the same time each of them remains entirely free to form similar or various compacts with other outside nationalities, or to maintain its own independent economic and tariff policies with nationalities outside the compacts. In view of the reservations by which the contracting nations are protected against unauthorized importation of goods or products through the intermediate territory of any associated nation, it would even be entirely possible for the United States, for instance, to maintain such compacts with each of two other American nations even while these were engaged in open economic warfare, since neither of them would be in any way obligated to the other by their mutually similar relations with the United States.

The agreements proposed will not notably change the immigration policies of the United States. We do not now limit or check immigration from the other North and South American nations by use of quota or other restrictions as we limit the entry of Europeans, Asiatics, and others. Quite to the contrary, such regulations have never been necessary as against other American nationalities, and the removal of the trivial but highly irritating passport and entry routine and the expression of an active preferential bias will go far toward building the permanent framework of good will and mutual understanding on which the free association of governments must finally depend.

On the other hand, however, and in spite of the fact that the United States could now enter into such a compact with either of several Central or South American nations without any appreciable dislocation of our own internal economy and with no embarrassment to our other international engagements, the compact will inevitably produce profound economic changes and far-reaching political effects. These developments are fairly predictable, and seem to me wholly desirable.

On the mainlands of the two American continents only Canada to the north, the little crown colony of British Honduras in Central America, and British, Dutch, and French Guiana on the northeast coast of South America, still owe allegiance to any European power. The others of these great territories are free, and, with the island republic of Cuba included, the twenty-two American republics represent more than seventy-five per cent of the territory, more than ninety-six per cent of the population, and ninety-eight per cent of the wealth of the Western Hemisphere. These republics are highly diverse in size, in population, and in the extent and concentration of their commercial developments, but they possess identities of interest that quite overshadow their diversities.

Their common historical background of revolt against European colonial exploitation has given them an intense patriotic nationalism, turned toward a destiny free from any ambition for colonial ownership. Their similar ideals of government are accomplished through written constitutions that protect the popular liberty by a general franchise and a governmental balance between almost precisely similar executive, legislative, and judicial establishments. Still more significant, they have a growing economic stake in the maintenance of world stability, failing which they have an ideal yet wholly practical hope of a strong and stable American accord.

The first step toward that accomplishment must be taken by the United States, which is both the oldest and the most highly developed of the American republics. The nations approached by us must be friendly, must be large enough and stable enough to complement in some degree the excesses and the deficiencies of the United States, and should preferably be far enough remote to remove any fear of political infiltration from either side of the national boundaries. The three nations with which the plan has the best prospect of successful initiation are Brazil, Colombia, and Nicaragua.

III

Brazil has a longer coast-line and a tenth larger area than the United States, has more than half the population of South America, or a larger number of people than either France, Italy, or England, and has probably the greatest undeveloped possibilities of productive wealth to be found on this planet. Much more immediately important even than this is the fact that Brazil is historically and traditionally more friendly to the United States than is any other nation.

The twenty states of Brazil have a range of latitude and of climate comparable to the extremes between our North Carolina mountains and the Equator. Brazil's forty-two million people speak Portuguese, and though they are as diverse in their interests and derived from as various racial stocks as is the population of the United States, they are also quite as definitely fused into a firm and proud national unity. Rio de Janeiro, the national capital set just within the tropics, represents only one extreme of Brazil's social and economic diversity, which ranges from the suave cosmopolitanism of that brilliant and beautiful city to the far distance of frontier camps and the unexplored Equatorial jungle. That national scene and its future possibilities can perhaps best be translated into North American terms by comparing Brazil's undeveloped territorial expanse to the North American frontier of the 1850's, but with every prospect of a Brazilian development during the next fifty years equal to or even greater than the expansion of the United States since the Civil War.

Every interest of Brazil and of the United States points them toward the mutual attainment of a stable and prosperous Western Hemisphere. They must be allowed each to complement the other in the development of social and economic ends that are in no way competitive or narrowly destructive, but may jointly be directed toward a peaceful and permanent American recovery.

Colombia is much smaller than Brazil, but its 447,000 square miles of territory and its 9,000,000 people make it nearly two-thirds as large as Mexico. In South America only Brazil and the Argentine have larger populations, and Colombia's territory is greater than the combined national masses of France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland. Colombia is nearer to the United States than any other South American country, but it is much less well known to the average American citizen than its importance would indicate.

In reality the nation is remarkably stable and highly civilized. It supports, for instance, a larger number of radio broadcasting and receiving stations within range of the United States than any other nation except Canada. Like Brazil, Colombia has an immense undeveloped frontier. The northern ranges of the Andes roughly parallel and shut off the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and these coastal areas and the fertile intermountain river valleys which support the present population occupy hardly a sixth of the nation's area or potential wealth. Back of the mountains and sloping gently toward the east at elevations of from 4,000 to 1,200 feet are nearly a quarter of a million square miles of as rich and well-watered land as there is in the world, hardly settled at all, and not yet completely explored.

Panama was formerly a part of Colombia, and following their separation and the building of the Panama Canal, the Colombians felt that they had been unjustly despoiled of their territory by the United States. That feeling has now entirely disappeared, in part because of the voluntary payment of damages by the United States, and in part because the growth of commercial relationships between the two countries has led to some realization of their mutual interests. The United States is by far Colombia's best customer, and is now more fully trusted than either of Colombia's Spanish-speaking neighbours.

Nicaragua, the smallest of the three nations and governmentally the least stable, has a land area of only 51,000 square miles and a population of 750,000 people. This is almost exactly the area of Alabama, but only about two-sevenths of Alabama's population.

Nicaragua is in Central America and almost triangular in shape, with the broader area toward the north and a southern width that narrows down to nearly a hundred miles. Along this southern boundary, Lake Nicaragua and the San Juan River form a natural waterway reaching nearly across the Isthmus. This was originally the preferred route for an inter-oceanic canal rather than the site of the present Panama Canal, and the United States has long held the exclusive rights for the Canal's construction. For this reason the United States has repeatedly intervened in Nicaragua to preserve order or to protect its special interests, and these interventions have sometimes assumed the proportions of active though unofficial wars. The Nicaraguan government fully recognizes this preferential relationship.

The Nicaraguan Canal route has several definite advantages over the Panama Canal, chief of which are the shorter distances from the seaports of the United States, the lower elevation at which a passage is possible and the consequent slightly lower costs of construction and upkeep, and a better water supply for operation of the canal locks. It is estimated that the traffic capacity of the Panama Canal will soon be reached, and would already have been passed except for the effects of the depression on world shipping. Increase of that canal's capacity by doubling its locks and widening the narrow portions of its channel is not possible because of the limited water supply of the Chagres River. In addition, and especially for purposes of naval defense, the two canals in their separate locations would be much preferable to a single canal of double capacity in either location. The construction of the Nicaragua Canal is already highly advisable.

Nicaragua, then, has an Isthmian Canal to offer the United States; but the value of that canal will be much more than lost in other directions if the United States fails to co-operate fully and fairly in a development of Nicaragua at least equivalent in total to the benefits that the United States will receive. Any less generous course will surely sacrifice the good will and friendship which the United States has so slowly built up among the Latin-American nations after the armed advantage which our government took in the revolt of Panama from Colombia; and so useless a sacrifice will finally blight every prospect of permanent pan-American accords.

IV

I do not think that it is necessary here to attempt any catalogue of the fields of economy in which the United States should seek the co-operation of South and Central America, although such a listing would at once dispel any thought that Brazil, Colombia, and Nicaragua are merely three rich fields for North American exploitation. Any association between them can only be reciprocally undertaken, and it can only exist on a basis of mutually profitable trust.

Although these alliances have been proposed and stated in terms of social and economic reciprocity, their first effect will be profoundly political. Their accomplishment will serve notice on the world that among these American nations there is a recognized identity of interest that replaces and vastly extends the classic Monroe Doctrine. No European or other outside undertaking can adversely affect any American right without the immediate concern of an association of nations whose power in their own sphere is supreme and unassailable. That their alliance is not organized into any formal categories of consultation and defined action will only render their combination more flexible and more pervasive in its influence. In precisely the same way, much of the force of the Monroe Doctrine for the past one hundred years has resided in the reserved implications of its statement. At once, then, and for all time, the rights of American neutrals will be made safe, so that they shall be free to stand aside from conflict and maintain themselves without fear of unsought attack or entanglement.

The compacts will initiate the greatest economic expansion and produce the most lasting prosperity the world has ever known. Not only is the United States the world's largest market and greatest agency of organized production, but Brazil, Colombia, and Nicaragua are together the world's greatest aggregate of potential development and are profoundly friendly to the United States. Each perfectly supplements the necessities and stimulates the prosperity of the other. In their association there may be established an entire freedom of trade without the sacrifice of a single national interest, and without the possibility of building up any permanent inequality of debtor and creditor nations. The compacts not only provide for the leveling of tariff barriers, but also for the free movement of capital and credit through permanently stable currency parities and a wholly individual freedom of movement to investors and investments; so that the discovery of economic opportunity will not be followed by a one-way flow of capital to foreign fields, but by the more intimate and personal relationships of a truly domestic economy on a new and inter-continental scale. That such a result is possible with the full protection of national and regional developmental preferences the whole state and federal experience of Brazil and of the United States assures us, but in the association of nations under the compacts there will be the additional protection of a gradual assumption of economic equalities and an orderly provision for their retirement.

Brazil and Colombia are each producers of sugar, for instance, but in each their exports are comparatively small and are more than returned to each nation in their manufactured equivalents of candy and spirits, so that there will be no immediate disastrous competition with the sugar production of the United States. Again, except for our imports of coffee from Brazil and Colombia, no single category of our foreign trade is larger or has better withstood the ravages of the depression than our purchases of diamonds. Brazil has great diamond fields capable of supplying the world, and Brazilian diamonds are commonly thought harder and more brilliant than those of South Africa, but the Brazilian mines are almost closed by the organized preferences that are given to the South African diamond trust by the diamond-cutting industry of Europe. Under the compacts, American markets will again be open to Brazil, the South African syndicate will be displaced from its monopoly of the American market, and a great American diamond-cutting industry will be established to the mutual profit of Brazil and the United States. Brazilian and Colombian tobaccos have a different body and flavour from those grown in the United States and will not seriously compete with them, but they will displace some of our importation from the West Indies, and Colombia's tropical mountain-grown leaf will be found richer and superior in quality to that we now get from Turkey and the Near East.

I have not space to extend further mention of the mutual accommodations natural to their production, but it is very literally true that even in advance of the full benefits that will accrue to the economic interests of the associated nations, no single important function of either nation will be dislocated by the immediate adoption of the agreements. Rather than that, such a diversion of the national attention from absorption in European and Asiatic affairs and the losses that our investments have suffered there will of itself go far to end an American depression. The United States needs such a realignment of national policies; it needs a widening of its economic boundaries; and it desperately needs the recovery and the economic revival which that accomplishment will produce.

This is an outline of new American frontiers. Their full development will use the united energy of the two American continents, but their development will produce a permanent security and a surplus of social energy that may allow a final conquest of the problems of modern civilization. The preliminary terms of that campaign were proposed in brief in the beginning of this article, but their discussion must wait on another occasion.

Chicago and General Education

NORMAN FOERSTER

IN THE old American college the four-year curriculum was almost wholly prescribed, because it was understood that certain subjects, studied in a certain way, would tend to produce liberally educated persons; it was further understood that such persons, by virtue of liberal education, would attain free minds capable of adjustment to the needs of life – personal, social, and vocational.

Late in the nineteenth century, this harmonious structure was rudely shaken, and finally brought to collapse, by the increase in knowledge of subject after subject, the division of subjects into an ever larger number of subjects, the impossibility of studying all the subjects, and the insistence of the proponents of novelties that all subjects in the expanding curriculum should be regarded as free and equal. The result was the general adoption of the "elective system" eloquently urged by Eliot of Harvard, a system which made for a progressive "enrichment" of the curriculum and a progressive impoverishment of the student. As Dean Boucher of Chicago puts it:

> Throughout his four years a student with no definite professional aim, finding no one on the college staff to guide him, would likely drift from one subject to another, depending upon chance, caprice, or student gossip for his guidance (or, if he had a professional objective, he would concentrate almost solely in a single departmental field), and would come out at the end of four years with an aca-

demic record sheet that should now be considered worthy of a place in a museum of educational monstrosities.

Those were the days when educators who wished to be considered progressive, willing to take every "forward step" dictated by the trends of the times, added department after department and course after course till the university catalogue became as intricate as an Italian railway time-table, as bulky as a Sears, Roebuck catalogue.

Then the pendulum began to swing the other way. An attempt was made to compromise between the old rigid curriculum and the newer fluid curriculum by the device known as group requirements, sometimes termed, with unconscious humour, "required electives". The curriculum was classified into several large groups of departments, and, during the first two years of college, the student was directed to sample the groups. If he did not want American history, for example, he might "take" logic or home economics, all three being, as likely as not, in the same group. In some institutions foreign language was not required of all students; in most, any of the natural sciences was acceptable. In general, the introductory courses offered by the departments were governed, in content, method, and spirit, by the unwarranted assumption that the students were incipient specialists in the subject in question. "Most departments", as Dean Boucher says, "seemed to think only in terms of specialization, as though the intellectual sun rose and set within their boundaries." A few departments offered two introductory courses, one for those who regarded themselves as incipient specialists and one for those who desired a liberal education. On the whole, all of these efforts at compromise were a failure. When this grew clear, a demand was frequently voiced for "orientation" or "survey" courses dealing with a smaller or larger group of subjects. Perhaps, as at Chicago, the physical and biological sciences were made the subject of a broad course (egregiously and revealingly misnamed "The Nature of the World and of Man"), or, elsewhere, the whole of contemporary civilization was surveyed in a single course, or all the great departments of knowledge taught in the college were touched upon in a single "Campus Course".

The next step was the Chicago Plan, the result, as Dean Boucher informs us, of ten years of earnest lucubration. It was launched in 1931, subsequently modified in the light of experience, and has now reached the stage when it is deemed ready to be offered to the public, for whatever it may be worth, within the covers of a book.* The book itself is badly written, needlessly dull, and anything but notable in vision, but it will be closely studied by educators and educationists bewildered by the fog which today encompasses higher education in America, both the wise leaders looking for the breaking in of light and the foolish leaders (quack doctors, Dean Boucher calls them) seeking change just because everybody is talking about experiments.

The Chicago Plan appears to have three objectives. Stated negatively, it seeks to avoid (1) the mechanical course-credit system, (2) the dispersed curriculum, and (3) late specialization. Stated positively, it seeks to introduce (1) the freedom of the student to proceed at his own pace, (2) a common core of educational experience, and (3) specialization as early as possible.

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* THE CHICAGO COLLEGE PLAN *by Chauncey Samuel Boucher* (UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS. 344 pp. $3.00).

The procedure for the attainment of these objectives is conceived mainly in terms of preparation for so-called comprehensive examinations. The requirements of the junior college (here known simply as the College)

> are stated solely in terms of educational requirements, and not at all in terms of course credits or residence requirements. . . . Each student must pass seven examinations, of which five are specifically required and two are elective. One of the five required examinations, the English qualifying examination, requires a demonstration that the student has developed acceptable and reliable habits of writing. The other four required examinations demand the attainment of the minimum essentials of factual information and an introduction to the methods of thought and work in each of four fields — the biological sciences, the humanities, the physical sciences, and the social sciences. . . . These five examinations represent a common core of educational experience and background for all students.

No study of either mathematics or foreign languages is required, provided that the student has sampled them for two years in high school. In addition to the examinations in the five required subjects, there are examinations in two elected subjects. While this completes the requirements, the average student has the opportunity, within his junior-college programme, of pursuing half of his work in the special field which he has chosen.

The most widely discussed feature of this plan, when first announced, was the freedom of the student. Attendance at lectures was voluntary; course credits, with their bookkeeping and adding-machine mechanism, were non-existent; the smart student could work independently, forge ahead of his fellows, take his examinations early, and shorten his college career. It was very simple and refreshing. In practice, comparatively few students succeed in shortening their labours, since "the majority need all of the class work offered as an aid to the attainment of the knowledge and intellectual power necessary to pass each prescribed and each elective examination". The usual features of university study are virtually all present: regular courses, meeting so many hours a week; students attending these courses faithfully; periodic papers and tests; and even the usual grading system. At first the grades assigned at the close of each quarter were S, U, and R, but last year the College returned to the prevailing symbols, A, B, C, D, F (the letter E being very unpopular in American universities), supplemented with R and Inc. The student must attain certain grades if he is to be permitted to remain in the College, but his final grades depend wholly upon his achievement in the comprehensive examinations. These examinations, it should be noted, cover only the work of a single year-course, and are no more "comprehensive" than the final examinations given in year-courses in many colleges and universities. The procedure at Chicago is not, therefore, so novel and so free of machinery as outsiders at first supposed. The machinery in fact begins to turn with high pressure during the Freshman Week preceding the first-year programme, when

> each student is given an individual appointment card indicating the time and place for his first conference with his Adviser, his medical examination, and the sessions for the taking of the following tests: the University of Chicago English Placement Test, the Minnesota Reading Examination (two parts — vocabulary and comprehension), the Thurstone Personality Schedule, the University of Chicago Physical Science Placement Examination, and the American Council on Education Psychological Examination (five parts — completion, arithmetic, artificial language, analogies, and opposites). This is the list of tests administered in September, 1934. The recent tendency is to use an increasing number of such tests.

After this "battery of tests", the battered student is in the hands of one of the staff of expert advisers.

> Each Adviser [we are informed] devotes full time to his duties during Freshman Week, several hours a day during the first week of a quarter, and a minimum of eight hours a week through the remainder of the academic year. The Advisers have their offices in a suite of rooms adjoining the office of the Dean of Students in the College and have stenographic and secretarial service at their command. The Adviser's secretary always has readily at hand for him his appointment book and all records of all types for all of his students. [For example, the College solemnly records the number of hours each student spends in dancing and in worshipping.]

It all sounds very business-like; Chicago seems determined not to be outdone in efficiency by Standard Oil or General Motors. Forever tested, examined, analyzed, advised, prodded, the young collegian of the Chicago Plan has scant time to reflect upon his personal independence and responsibility. Chicago has not avoided mechanism: it has merely substituted one kind of elaborate mechanism for another, though one must freely grant that the new is better than the old.

Another feature of the plan, early specialization, has fared better. During the first two years, as I have indicated, the average student has the opportunity of pursuing half of his work in his special field. After that, he is permitted to pursue all of his work in his special field – in his chosen department and related departments – and this work is, so far as possible, of graduate or professional calibre. It is made plain to him that he should discover his specialty early, four years of liberal education being "unnecessary and wasteful", and that if he does discover it early, he may hope to secure his A. B. degree in less than the four years. The result is that a superior student who knows from the beginning what he wants, is stimulated to move toward specialization, and its narrowing tendencies, with the utmost speed. The plan succeeds, no doubt; but its success is deplorable, for the superior student is precisely the one who can profit most from liberal training, whose powers can be widened by it, whose vision can be increased by it, whose professional competence will be enhanced by a broad foundation in general study. Early specialization, under American conditions, can only mean premature specialization. But Chicago thinks otherwise. As early as Freshman Week,

> each student fills out a vocational-interest schedule. The returns last autumn (1934) showed that 63.1 per cent had made a vocational decision [tentative, in most cases, surely, for students are constantly making "decisions"], 36.9 per cent had not made a vocational decision, and

40.1 per cent expressed a desire for vocational counseling. Toward the end of October a letter is sent by the Executive Secretary of the Board of Vocational Guidance and Placement. : . .

It is also the duty of the adviser to help each of his 160 students to find a vocational aim, and the personnel record blanks contain such entries as "Choice of Field of Specialization", "Choice of Vocation", "What vocation do you plan to enter?" and "Choice of Career". The student is asked to check one of five statements, the extreme statements being: "I am so undecided that I can't keep up interest in my work" and "I am inspired to do my best by my definite choice of a career." Behind all this one notes, of course, the application, or misapplication, of certain half-truths emphasized in contemporary psychology.

I come now to the most significant feature of the new plan, its provision for a common core of educational experience. "The problem of the training of specialists", according to Dean Boucher, "has been adequately and admirably solved." On the other hand, "The great problem of provision for even passably adequate general education has not been solved." Dean Boucher is right; and he is right when he adds: "Yet, in the present stage of development of man in his so-called 'modern civilization', it would seem that our greatest need is provision for adequate general education for citizens in the modern world." This agrees, I take it, with the words of President Roosevelt at William and Mary last autumn, when he declared that "the necessities of our time demand that men avoid being set in grooves, that they avoid the occupational predestination of the older world, and that in the face of change and development in America, they must have a sufficiently broad and comprehensive conception of the world in which they live to meet its changing problems with resourcefulness and practical vision" – "a broad, liberal, and non-specialized education".

Let us grant that Chicago's plan succeeds in providing for specialisms and grooves, and go on to discuss it in its relation to general or liberal education. It dedicates, ~~we have seen~~, one half of the first two years to general education – only a quarter of the traditional four-year liberal course. From the point of view of one who really believes in liberal education, this is a meagre allowance, a cavalier performance. By means of five introductory courses – a bowing acquaintance with five large subjects – the student is to come to understand both the world of nature and human history past and present, and emerge a "well-rounded" man or woman who knows "how we live in the twentieth century". Perhaps we should say *four* courses, since the fifth is devoted to nothing more than the rudiments of good form in such writing as is done in the other courses. Four courses, four introductions, four pleased-to-meet-you's. And why *introductions* after so many years in the schools and high schools? Why should not the high schools do some serviceable general educating in the last two years of their curricula? This is being attempted by the University High School controlled by the University of Chicago, but it is idle to hope that, within the next half-century, American high-school students who ought to prepare for college will actually be prepared, for all signs indicate that the high schools will give more and more of their energies to the task of providing training of a sort not suitable as preparation for college. The private colleges and universities will presently accept any sort of high school course, provided the student has a high enough standing in his class (Beloit already balks only at the last five per cent), and the state universities will accept anybody. Obviously, under these conditions, the institutions of higher learning will not be able to build upon any common ground of achieved general education. Higher education will have to begin pretty low.

Chicago recognizes the need of beginning low, by offering desperately broad introductory courses. But it does not recognize the need, implied by a low and late beginning, of carrying the process of general education on till the object of general education has really been achieved. Broad survey courses must either be followed by further study in the same fields, or be conducted at a pace so leisurely that something more than fragmentary and superficial and misleading knowledge can be attained by the average student. The best part of the Chicago programme is the double course in natural science, for two years devoted to the biological and physical sciences perhaps provide room enough for serious accomplishment. The rest of the programme is flimsy. The course in English, part or all of which is omitted by many students, is merely ancillary. The course in the social sciences, one must surmise, suffers from the usual weaknesses of the subject, an unimpressive body of assured knowledge and a large admixture of sentimentalism in the interpretation of that knowledge (faith in the natural goodness of man and the beneficence of mechanisms). If the social sciences *are* what they profess to be, three of the four required subjects are in the field of science. This leaves only one quarter of the programme for the humanities, and the humanities course is the sketchiest of the four. Its virtues and defects are well estimated by a student who wrote as follows:

> A general education should not be fifty per cent [natural] science. One half of our general education consists of the physical and biological sciences. On the other hand, such a large field as the humanities course is crowded into one course. Now the theory behind the humanities course is excellent. But the practice is not. As you probably know, the course attempts to cover the history of man and mankind from earliest times through the present day. It includes the literature, art, music, architecture, religion, and philosophy of each period of history. It gives a broad sweep of history that is breath-taking in its scope. It is thrilling. It gives a picture of man's achievements in the field of thought and in the arts – but it covers none of these adequately and does none of them justice. It seems, then, that this course might well be divided into two distinct courses – one dealing with history alone, the other a pure humanistic course dealing with literature, thought, and the fine arts.

This is so reasonable that Dean Boucher feels obliged to give a rebuttal. His defence of a one-year course covering human history – political, social, economic – from 4000 B.C. to 1935 A.D., together with literature, the fine arts, religion, and philosophy, may be left to speak for itself:

> It is interesting to know that similar suggestions have been made for each of the other fields by various students. A student who is, or was, or who becomes, particularly interested in one of the four fields wants more of that field, feels that the field is worthy of more time in the

programs of all students, and suggests that two year-courses, instead of one, in this field would be advisable. Perhaps this is good evidence that we have hit a fairly good balance in the present program, particularly since each student has leeway to the extent of two required and one optional year-course or year-sequence electives for pursuit of individual interests.

Such is the "ongoing program" (in Dean Boucher's phrase) of general or liberal education at Chicago. I am afraid we must still say, with our author, that the great problem of adequate general education has not been solved. Nor is it likely that it ever will be solved within the limits of one year of college, or two years, built upon the shifting sands of high school *un*preparation for college. Superficial education is not general education. The Chicago plan provides for superficial education tempered with specialization; it does not really provide for general education. General education implies, not a superficial training running parallel with expert training, but a genuine reconciliation of breadth and thoroughness. It implies a reasonable degree of thoroughness *within* a reasonable degree of breadth. It therefore implies maturing and mellowing, not speed and efficiency. It implies assimilation, not item-gathering. It implies humane organization, reflection, penetration, gradual recognition of relationships. It implies the dominance of facts by principles. It implies judgement. It implies taste. It implies, in a word, large materials and much work upon them. And all of this takes far more time than a faculty of specialists will feel disposed to give to it.

One must question, consequently, whether the problem of an adequate general education can ever be solved by the expedient of introductory, survey, or orientation courses, unless they are prolonged beyond the point of obvious superficiality. Perhaps, instead of offering inspiring surveys, our colleges will do well to present a few selected subjects closely, even if the selection of the subjects must be more or less arbitrary. Something like a rational programme, to which we may have to come later if not sooner, was proposed by Professor Robert Shafer in the *Bookman* of July, 1931. He outlined a three-year programme for a new college, in the first year providing for mathematics beyond trigonometry, philosophy including the elements of logic, the literature of whatever foreign language the entering freshman could read rapidly at sight, and English and American literature and history. In the second and third years, the student would have a course in the elements of physics, including experimental work, but devote the major portion of his time to the mastery of a prescribed set of books, real books, from Plato's *Republic* to Mill *On Liberty*, not snatches of books or feebly thought-out textbooks telling about books. Here again we have a common core of educational experience, but a core firm and sound, not soft and worm-eaten. It is idle to hope that anything of this sort will be widely adopted in the coming years. Those who are shaping our secondary schools and colleges have neither the courage nor the purposefulness needed for progress toward such a programme. The courage might gather weight if there were clearness of purpose, but this is precisely what is wanting. In place of clearness of purpose, we have vagueness in experiment.

"The most characteristic feature of the modern world is bewilderment. . . . We do not know where we are going, or why; and we have almost given up the attempt to find out." With these uncomfortable words the President of the University of Chicago began a robust analysis of the issues in higher education, published in the *International Journal of Ethics* in January, 1934. Dr. Hutchins asserted that the modern world, from Bacon and Descartes to the present, has progressively lost the power of thought and has thus denied the very nature of man. "As the Renaissance could accuse the Middle Ages of being rich in principles and poor in facts," he says, "we are now entitled to inquire whether we are not rich in facts and poor in principles." "My thesis is that in modern times we have seldom tried reason at all, but something we mistook for it, that our bewilderment results in large part from this mistake, and that our salvation lies not in the rejection of the intellect but in a return to it." And this return to the intellect, to ideas, this mastery of science by philosophy, must be the object above all of higher education, for "a university is the place of all places to grapple with those fundamental principles which rational thought seeks to establish. A university course of study, therefore, will be concerned first of all not with current events, for they do not remain current, but with the recognition, application, and discussion of ideas." And ideas, he adds, are mainly to be found in "the books of those who clarified and developed them" (such books as Mr. Shafer had in mind), not in "the textbooks which, consumed at the rate of ten pages a day, now constitute our almost exclusive diet from the grades to the PH.D". Only by rational thought directed upon the best that has been said and done in the world can we hope to transcend the items of information in which we have been losing ourselves. What profits it if a man gain all the facts and loses his mind?

Well, something of this robustness enters into the conception and execution of the Chicago Plan of general education, and more will follow. Progress in this direction must be slow, for the disciples of Francis Bacon and John Dewey, who are many, are committed to relativity instead of principles, to a sophisticated opportunism instead of rational purposefulness, to fact-gathering and experimentalism rather than the application of ideas; but progress there will be, in proportion as one man here, another there, awakes to the bankruptcy of the modern mind.

And in any case one must welcome the revival, at Chicago, of a certain intellectual community. Under the old system still prevailing in America, as Dean Boucher observes,

> graduates of the same institution and of the same student generation discovered that they had nothing in common in intellectual experience, background, or outlook; and yet they had been members of the same university community, were now members of the same civic and social community, and were confronted with many common problems in the same physical and social world. Each discovered in the other fatal lacunae in his training as a supposedly educated person. Each at first would make mental note of the ignorance and lack of educational balance of the other. Second thought, however, was likely to place the blame and responsibility on Alma Mater.

At Chicago, at some other places, Alma Mater is awakening to the right of her children to be given a world to live in, not a chaos. The much-mooted "individual differences" among students have their place, and can be given recognition in many ways, but the time has come for us to remember that students are not only individuals but human beings and contemporaries. We have pushed the concept of idiocrasy so far that it is palpably becoming (to use another word from the same root) sheer idiocy. In the future we may expect to hear more of the concept of community, unless humanity somehow loses its instinct of self-preservation.

The Douglas Mythology

ARTHUR J. PENTY

IN A recent number of *New Democracy** Mr. Byron Scott replies to my article *Truth and Error in the Douglas Scheme* which I contributed to the April number of THE AMERICAN REVIEW; or, to be more correct, criticizes certain items in it, for he makes no attempt to reply to the article as a whole. He seeks to invalidate what I have to say by suggesting that I suffer from a complex where the Douglas Scheme is concerned. Thus he says:

> One suspects that Mr. A. J. Penty, like Mr. G. D. H. Cole, suffers from an emotional impediment whenever he looks at the Douglas Scheme. It must be recalled that the National Guilds movement in England was powerful just after the War, and that Social Credit made its first converts among its leaders. To many Guildsmen at that time Social Credit was "the Orage Heresy". Well, the Guilds movement has gone down and the Social Credit movement has come up, and Mr. Penty and Mr. Cole look back regretfully to the old days.

This is certainly criticism of a very fundamental kind and it calls for a reply.

There is a sense in which it is true to say that Mr. Cole *was* the National Guilds movement and to that extent its failure was a personal failure. But it cannot be said of me because I was never at any time an orthodox member of the movement. My support was always qualified, for National Guilds was not at all what I was after. It seemed to me to be Syndicalism plus the State. Nevertheless it broke the ice. It challenged Collectivism, secured recognition for the principle of self-government in industry, and popularized the word "Guild" which operated to break down popular prejudice against ideas of mediaeval origin. I therefore accepted National Guilds as a *fait accompli*, and worked to remove the errors that were associated with it, for I saw clearly that failure was inevitable if the attempt were made to establish Guilds before their principles and policy were well thought out. The failure of the Building Guilds confirmed my fears, for though the immediate cause of their failure was the withdrawal of credit yet experience proved that the principle upon which they were organized was unworkable, and apart from any problem of credit they must before long have come to grief.

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* *New Democracy*, June 1st, 1935.

Though the failure of the Building Guilds discredited the National Guild movement it did not invalidate my position.* Indeed so far from it doing so it justified the line I had taken in advocating Regulative rather than Producing Guilds which the National Guilds were, and it seemed to me not improbable that the failure of the Building Guilds would react to secure recognition for the principle of Regulative Guilds and the Guild movement be transformed. That it did not work out this way was in my opinion due in the main to the attitude of Orage whose control of publicity and conversion to the Douglas Scheme brought confusion into the counsels of the movement at the crisis. As an expositor of ideas Orage had no equal, but he was deficient in judgement. He backed the National (producing) Guilds until the failure of the Building Guilds had exposed the fallacy of the theory, and he would have nothing to do with Regulative Guilds because he did not believe they would meet with support, though their organization under the auspices of Fascism has since proved the contrary and their practicality, for the Guilds of the Corporative State are Regulative Guilds. Ramiro de Maeztu upon whom Orage leaned during the War once said that Orage was a man "who knew the shapes of things perfectly, but did not know their weight" — a judgement I think all who were brought into close contact with Orage would endorse. Give Orage any idea and he could immediately develop all its logical implications. But, he never appeared to be quite sure whether any idea he supported was true or false. There was a vacuum somewhere at the centre.

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* In a book by an American author – *Guild Socialism* by Niles Carpenter – the statement is made that I was one of the promoters of the London Building Guild. But that was not so. I had no idea anything of the kind was contemplated until its organization was announced. My connection with the London Building Guild did not arise from the fact that I had written on Guild theory, but because being an architect I was asked to organize a group of architects and surveyors to give the Guild any technical assistance it might require. I represented this group on the Board. But as I was doubtful about the success of the experiment, and had no intention of being blamed for its failure, I did not take an active part in the management, but used the position in which I found myself for the purpose of studying Labour politics at first hand. Mr. Carpenter entirely failed to appreciate the relation in which I stood towards the National Guild movement and as a consequence almost every reference to me in his book is mistaken.

Among other errors is the extraordinary statement that I was one of the founders of the National Guilds League. So far from this being true I was not even invited to join it. I knew nothing about it until I read an account of its foundation in the *Herald*. I did not join the League until nearly two years after its formation.

Meanwhile the study of history had led me to see economic Guilds in a different light, to see them as institutions for the maintenance of fixed and just prices and from 1917 onwards I advocated Guilds exclusively for this purpose, emphasizing fixed prices rather than Guilds. My propaganda on behalf of fixed and just prices eventually joined hands with the agricultural propaganda of Montague Fordham and led to the foundation of the Rural Reconstruction Association in which what was vital in the Guild idea found hospitality. The R. R. A. has succeeded not only in uniting agricultural opinion throughout the country for fixed and just prices, organized marketing, and the control of imports, but in influencing both the Labour and National Governments, which are gradually translating the Association's policy into practice. But there are few who know that the R. R. A. developed out of the Guild movement. Mr. Byron Scott, therefore, is entirely mistaken in supposing that the Guild movement is defunct. It has not "gone down" but underground where it has taken root; and though it is no longer in the public eye as the panacea for our social ills it is there all the same, and doing more useful work than when it had the limelight.

Now let us pass on to consider the fortunes of Social Credit. That it has met with an astonishing success is not to be denied. But if I am not mistaken it is one of those facile half-successes that lead to ultimate impotence, for like the Socialist movement it has advanced by making concessions to public opinion. As a consequence its theory has undergone a progressive transformation and deterioration. Its frequent changes place the critic who invariably lives on the outskirts of the movement at a disadvantage, for he can never hope to be quite as up-to-date as those who live at the centre. But if in these days I live at the circumference there was a time when I lived at the centre, and when nobody else lived there except Douglas and Orage. The official account of the origin of the movement is pure fiction, if that given by that keen Douglasite the Dean of Canterbury at the time of the death of Orage is to be treated as official.

According to the Dean, when Douglas first called at the office of the *New Age* Orage was not there, and in his absence

> Miss Marks, at that time the devoted secretary of the *New Age*, arranged for an interview on the next day at eleven o'clock. When Orage heard of the visitor and the appointment, he said with feigned severity, "if you have wasted my time. . . ." But with his invariable punctuality he met Douglas at the time appointed.
>
> Orage was an excellent listener and Douglas talked freely for an hour. Orage merely said: "Don't expect my verdict now; but you will hear from me before very long." To Miss Marks he said: "That is either a very wonderful or a very dangerous man. I am going home. I must digest what I have heard. Keep all visitors away."
>
> At 5 A.M. next morning he was still digesting, and blaming himself as a life-long student of economics for his slowness of perception. But dawn of day brought dawn of apprehension and forthwith he and Douglas thrashed out the details till the crystal clearness came. Orage foresaw the warfare that confronted him, counted carefully the cost, looked to his weapons, and went over the top.*

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* *Social Credit*, Nov. 16, 1934.

Exactly what passed at the first meeting between Douglas and Orage I do not know. But I know sufficient to know that that is not a true account. So far from it being true that the circumstances of Orage's conversion were of so dramatic a nature Douglas had no scheme at all when he first approached Orage, while so far from it being true that Orage foresaw the warfare that confronted him and carefully counted the cost he did not at the start believe there would be any warfare at all, for Douglas had managed to persuade him that his scheme was a business proposition that would be immediately acceptable to both Capital and Labour. Douglas repeatedly urged his scheme on the grounds that it was a business proposition. I can vouch for the accuracy of this statement for in those days (1918-19) I was accustomed to meet Orage and Douglas weekly for the purpose of discussion and it was at those meetings that the Douglas Scheme gradually took shape. For several months prior to the arrival of Douglas I had been accustomed to meet Orage weekly to discuss the economic situation that was developing as a consequence of the War. At these meetings I constantly urged him to attack the policy of Maximum Production – which, at the time, was being advocated on the platform and in the press to provide the money to pay for the War – because it would lead to unemployment and an economic deadlock. But it was not until I lent him the proofs of a book I had written to expose the fallacy – *Guilds and the Social Crisis* – that he came to see it. When he did, he immediately began to attack Maximum Production week by week in the *New Age*. Thus before Douglas arrived on the scene Orage had been converted to his central idea and could meet him half-way.

One day in December, 1918, about a month after he began attacking Maximum Production in the *New Age*, Orage arrived at our weekly meeting with a copy of the current number of the *English Review* which contained an article by Douglas.* Its author, he said, had been to see him and he would like to know what I thought of the article he had left, for the author agreed with me as to the perils of Maximum Production though for a different reason. After reading it I told Orage that while I agreed with Douglas as to what was happening I could not agree with him as to why it was happening because he did not recognize the part which the unrestricted use of machinery was playing in the creation of the problem. However as Douglas recognized that an economic deadlock would undoubtedly follow a policy of Maximum Production, and as a restriction of the use of machinery could not be considered an issue of practical politics, this difference did not present itself as a barrier to our cooperation, and so Douglas was invited to join our weekly meetings to hammer out a policy.

It was at these weekly meetings that the Douglas Scheme gradually took shape over a period of several months. Douglas's first idea of how to avert the economic deadlock was to confiscate the War Loan and distribute it equally to every member of the community.** This idea, adumbrated a couple of months after

* "The Delusion of Super-Production" by Major C. H. Douglas: *English Review*, December, 1918.

** This idea appeared in the Notes of the Week of the *New Age*, Feb. 13, 1919, which on that week were written by Douglas because Orage was ill.

the "historic" meeting, did not appear to meet with the approval of anybody, for, in those days when revolution was in the air, all thought that if it were possible to confiscate the War Loan it would be possible to confiscate everything, so why stop there.

Douglas's next idea of resolving the deadlock was by means of an assisted price scheme, or as it was described in those days "selling below cost", and reimbursing the producer of any commodity for his loss by presenting him with Treasury Notes. Mr. Byron Scott takes exception to me saying "any commodity" suggesting that I should have written "ultimate commodity". If that is so how does he reconcile it with the fact that Douglas produced a scheme for the mining industry in which coal was to be sold below cost, for it cannot be argued that coal is an ultimate commodity except where it is used for domestic purposes which only accounts for about five per cent of its consumption? This Scheme is still referred to in Social Credit propaganda though I should have thought Douglasites would only be too pleased to let it "rest in peace", for it has no relevance whatsoever to the problem that confronts the mining industry which, as everyone knows, is due to the growing use of petrol and the curtailment of the export trade owing to the construction on the Continent of vast electrification schemes which make use of water power. And since one of the reasons why Continental nations embarked on these schemes was to render themselves as independent of Britain as possible for their sources of power it is obvious that the problems of coal mining cannot be met merely by subsidizing production.

Shortly after this Douglas produced a third scheme which proposed to equate consumption with production not by selling below cost but by a free distribution of purchasing power, a proposal which eventually became crystallized in the slogan "dividends for all". But this idea which underlies the popular success of the movement was announced after I had withdrawn from the weekly discussions with Orage and Douglas. I parted company with them with great reluctance, and only after it became evident to me that an impossible gulf existed between us. If I could have found any possible basis of compromise I should certainly have done so, for my separation from Orage at the time seemed like the end of all things. It meant going out into the wilderness and starting afresh, and nobody does that if he can see an alternative. The affirmation of Mr. Byron Scott that under Social Credit the Guild idea would once more become viable could only be true on the assumption that the Douglas Scheme is equated with a free distribution of purchasing power and understood as a measure of temporary economic expediency to enable society to turn a difficult corner. It certainly would not be so if it were established as the basis of the new social order, which is what Douglasites demand, as we shall understand later.

Though I had known Orage intimately for twenty years there was always something about him that I did not understand. I had for some time before the arrival of Douglas been trying to persuade him to substitute the fixation of prices and wages at a just level for "the abolition of the wage system" as the *raison d'être* of Guild propaganda, not only because the latter seemed to be an unrealizable ideal but because as it was borrowed from Communism it operated to place the Guild movement at the mercy of Communists, who as a consequence of the Russian Revolution were becoming vociferous. But he would have nothing to do with the idea. All I could get out of him was that he wanted "an economic solution" and for some mysterious reason the fixation of prices did not belong to that category. What he meant by saying he wanted an "economic solution" I could not make out and I might have remained in the dark indefinitely had not Douglas come along, when it gradually dawned upon me that what Orage believed in was economic magic. Whereas I was searching for principles to reconstruct society which could only be rebuilt gradually he was searching for a formula which would effect a transformation overnight, and it was because the Douglas Scheme appealed to him on these grounds that he came to give it his unqualified support. Looking back nowadays I can see it was all inevitable. Though Orage and I had been friends and had politically co-operated he never gave me his unqualified support. I now understood that parting was inevitable; our mentalities were as different as those of the orthodox and the heretic.

When I had travelled thus far I got a slant not only on Orage and the Douglas Scheme but upon modern economics in general. Orthodoxy and heresy corresponded to two fundamentally different types of mind between which compromise was finally impossible. And as a consequence, under the guise of economics the battle which in the Middle Ages was fought between Christianity and magic was still being waged.

There was a Christian approach and a magical approach to economics as well as to religion. Since the days of the French Revolution politics and economics had been infected with the magical idea, which in politics took the form of a belief in the possibility of a sudden transformation of society, and in economics of a search for a formula capable of being crystallized into a slogan, so essential to democratic politics, with its inevitable corollary that economics was a separate and detached proposition, a self-contained science, for magic only functions on one plane at a time. It was because the approach of Douglas was magical rather than Christian that he was led to make such exclusive claims for the problem of credit; to affirm that the economic problem had nothing to do with morals, machinery, art, agriculture, foreign trade or any other social issue; it was just currency, a problem of technique like magneto trouble or to use their own phrase "it was as technical as a main drainage scheme". The attempt of Mr. Byron Scott to prove that the Douglas Scheme has always recognized a problem of machinery only proves that his contact with the movement is recent, for this recognition followed and did not precede the débâcle of 1929. That a recognition of one aspect of the problem of machinery was implicit in the Douglas position is not to be denied. But in the early days it was not politic to stress it. Douglas then believed his Scheme was a "business proposition".

To me all this was superficial. The fallacy of the mechanical (which is the magical) approach to economics had been exposed once and for all by Ruskin in the first four pages of *Unto This Last* and what he said is as true today as when it was written. That there are things in economics which are more or less mathematical and have nothing to do with morals, such as the consequences of a good or bad harvest or of abundance or scarcity of raw material, I admit. They undoubtedly affect the prosperity of society, but not its justice; and it was with its justice that we were concerned. The social and economic problem was finally nothing more than the more obtrusive symptom of an internal spiritual deterioration. Viewed in this light, the solution was not to be conceived primarily in the terms of economics but of a new way of life, a subordination of the material to the spiritual, and economics were only valid in so far as they kept this end in view. Douglasites will often affirm this to be their aim, but they think too much in the terms of A + B for me to believe theirs is the path of spirituality. A + B may lead to the paradise of the magicians, not to that of humanity.

But alas, what was so clear to me was not equally clear to others. And it was not long before I saw, to my amazement, the Douglas System of economic magic, the rejection of which had turned my mind in the direction of Christianity, being advocated as Christian Sociology and myself branded as heretical. Douglas himself is extremely logical; his conclusions follow logically from his premises; and he could not have been guilty of such gross inconsistency. But his followers are not always as realistic or consistent. They see no reason why his conclusions should not be tacked on to any system of thought in which they happen to believe. Hence, our confusion.

Victorian England and Modern America

JOSEPH E. BAKER

IN SPITE of the panic four years before, millions of visitors were attracted to the city by the exposition of the fruits of Progress – "the fairy tales of science", and the achievements of rugged industrialists operating under an economy of individualism that was just beginning to give way to government regulation. "Enormous excursion trains daily poured their thousands" – millions between May and October. Turning from the exhibits, and the architecture that housed them, to the city itself, the visitors from the country and distant towns found a metropolis of something like three million population, a city of clerks who were carried to their offices by hundreds of buses; of new-rich, vigorous, unpolished business men who lived farther out; and of wretched slum-dwellers who managed somehow to keep alive and whose grumbling was not so serious as to seem like a threat of revolution. The visitor could find many theatres, but no new play worth seeing; and newspapers, comparing perhaps unfavourably with the local papers that he had read every morning, using the Freedom of the Press to administer "soothing draughts" of laissez-faire economics to their readers. Chicago in 1933? It could be. But this is a picture of London at the time of the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in 1851, as one lives through it in

Early Victorian England.[*] Chicago, when she thought herself at the apex of human progress, was really eighty-two years behind the times, or rather more, for in London, thinking and writing and in politics creative, was a constellation of geniuses such as no "English-speaking" city could boast since the days of Elizabeth. "It is part of the felicity of the fifties to possess a literature which was at once topical, contemporary, and classic; to meet the Immortals in the streets, and to read them with added zest for the encounter." "Of all the decades in our history, a wise man would choose the eighteen-fifties to be young in."

Notwithstanding the greater joy of life in Victorian London, and her lesser degree of smugness, a man from twentieth-century America would still find himself at home there, more at home than in pioneer or planter America of the same period, or in the New York of *Martin Chuzzlewit.* For that matter we are much closer to Victorian England than the English are today. And the parallel is very important for us: a nation of individualists, utilitarian in spirit, inclined to scoff at the Middle Ages and the Eighteenth Century; well pleased with its modernity, its spotty "prosperity", and its commercial and industrial leadership among nations of the world – preferring to ascribe that pre-eminence not to natural resources or to the accidents of military history, but to the practical genius of its people and their "Anglo-Saxon" liberty. An age of middle-class rule, when the labourer thought of himself as a potential bourgeois (or a failure) while even the gentleman disguised himself as a commoner – for the "agricultural interest" had been sacrificed to the industrial by parliamentary politics: the "black-coated proletarian" was replacing the countryman, and the business man, apparently, replacing the country gentleman, though the Universities were doing a great deal in "civilizing the plutocracy". Journalism – "practically the Press of today". Church affiliation – predominantly Protestant, though Macaulay said that there were not two hundred men in London who believed in the Bible; and certain isolated intellectuals or highly cultivated coteries were making bold ventures into materialism – or, to the greater surprise of the age, into Catholicism.

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[*] EARLY VICTORIAN ENGLAND 1830-1865 (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. 2 vols. 414 & 558 pp. $14.00)

In spite of the misery to be seen on all sides, misery that would have shocked Chaucer's plowman or a Tudor "lusty beggar", the real religion, or rather superstition, of the times was a quite uncritical faith in Progress, which would work automatically because of a spirit which "rolls through all things" (in the words of a philosopher-poet of pantheism who died in 1850) so that it was foolish or even vicious to oppose the "spirit of the age". The Tennysonians who felt superior to the static Age of Anne which could say "Whatever is, is right", were basing their own optimism on assumptions even more difficult to defend, that "Whatever is going to be, is going to be right". Even the Opposition, in Carlyle or Newman, was so near Romantic monism as to recommend the worship of practical Success, or to find matter for admiration in the mere fact of Development. Occupations that had demanded creative expression by skilled artisans were being industrialized one after another. Precisely in 1851 England and Wales saw the population of urban districts rise above the population of rural districts. The impact of a machine age had caught an agricultural country without a plan, or an authority that could plan, though it was just beginning to develop a Civil Service to head off a lapse into barbarism. The tradition of meeting social problems with a rational use of the free human will was assailed on the one hand by a decaying Calvinistic determinism that played into the hands of hard-boiled Malthusians (Why should humanity try to interfere with a Preordained Struggle for Existence which naturally led to a Survival of the Elect?), and on the other hand by an embryonic materialistic determinism which was beginning to ask the same question as if it were ultramodern. Fortunately (Matthew Arnold did not realize how fortunately) that generation was able to attack its problems boldly, humanely, and not too fatalistically, mainly for just this reason: The leading spirits of the age found themselves between two inhuman creeds, one dead, the other powerless to be born.

Briefly, in Victorian England we are in our own world, and yet we have the immense advantage of perspective. It is this that makes a genuine knowledge of Victorian culture of such practical importance to Americans today. It is a sound distribution of undergraduate interest that half the English literature studied in our colleges should be that which has been written since 1800 – since the beginning of the Big Four of Revolutions that have given us our own special problems: the Scientific, the Democratic, the Industrial, and the Romantic. Different periods of the literature available to us in our own tongue offer different opportunities for breadth of experience, and nineteenth-century literature has its own peculiar contribution to make towards illuminating the dark places of contemporary American manners, thought, and feeling, because it gives us a combination we can find nowhere else: a literature concerned with our own problems, yet remote enough to allow us to read it with a minimum of prejudice. The literature from Shelley to Shaw lends itself as no other does to the development of the sanity and objectivity that are so necessary in this day of fanaticism and passion. What we get excited about when we read it in Hoover, Hitler, or Ludwig Lewisohn, we can discuss impartially when we find it in Macaulay, Carlyle, or Disraeli.

But this very distance in time and space, combined with close contact with social problems still vital, makes necessary for nineteenth-century literature a special type of approach. As a Committee of the Modern Language Association of America recognized in a Report this year: "A study of the social and political history of the period is essential for an understanding of the literature." Trying to read that literature without knowing the background is like trying to read Chaucer without knowing Middle English. But here we touch upon an academic scandal: Most of our graduate schools do not equip their Ph.D.'s to teach nineteenth-century literature, though they equip them to teach Chaucer, Elizabethan Drama, and even Anglo-Saxon. Today, after two generations of philology, even an undergraduate taking a course in Chaucer is wisely required to have the elementary linguistic equipment necessary to appreciate what he reads; but even a Ph.D. going forth to teach courses made up largely of writers from Wordsworth to Hardy is not expected to have the elementary philosophic or historical background to understand what he is teaching. This is the severest indictment against the sincerity and competence of the professional training offered by our graduate schools. It is little wonder that men can go through our colleges and still consider literature an effeminate matter, for aesthetes and pedants; carrying away the impression that clarity of thought and forcefulness of expression have no application to serious social and intellectual problems. Some acquaintance with Victorian literature, on a level comparable to that demanded if the student elects "Arthurian Romance" or "Labour Problems", would do more than any other single thing to dispel the mists of jargon that now hang around our social discussions, and might even free our influential classes from slavery to pseudo-scientific theories long ago thrashed out. And there is nothing that would do more to raise the level of our literary criticism; many of our book-reviewers gave the college a chance to do something to their minds, and are hardly to be blamed if their learned professors left them with the impression that scholarship and authorship are two separate things.

There are honourable exceptions, and the universities which have been first to realize the peculiar value of nineteenth-century study have exercised an exceptional influence on contemporary American letters. For the rest, even another recent book, *Leaders of the Victorian Revolution**, would mark an advance. The author, J. W. Cunliffe, was formerly Director of the School of Journalism at Columbia University. This book is presented to us as "an unusual discussion", in that "it considers the literature of the period in its relation to the turn in the national sentiment and opinion which made possible the revolutionary changes in the political, economic, and social [intellectual and religious should be added] life of England that have affected the entire world and are still matters of controversy". This is as if a professor had just appeared to suggest that teachers of Chaucer in universities should learn to read Middle English, or that Shakespeare might possibly be studied with reference to Elizabethan staging, or as if some professor in a Medical School had suggested boldly that the more ambitious students might cast a glance at physiology. And yet, to our shame be it said, in some institutions pretending a devotion to higher learning Cunliffe's book would be a step in the right direction. Some of the popular fallacies perpetuated by our book-reviewers and dilettante teachers are avoided by Cunliffe. He points out that "Victorian" prudery was really inherited from an earlier period, and that Bowdler's expurgated Shakespeare was pre-Victorian. (The Oxford *Early Victorian England* does much more to squelch the "nonsense" about Victorian prudery and show it "largely imaginary".) He neatly indicates the origins of the "Victorian Revolution" in the Puritan Rebellion; and, better still, shows that Darwin's theory of Natural Selection was an application to biology of Malthus's economic theory developed by and for a cut-throat industrial system. It is a relief to have it recognized that the Corn Laws were repealed not as a humanitarian measure by noble idealists, but because of "a skillfully conducted agitation" on the part of "traders and politicians" and laissez-faire economists; and that agricultural labourers were thus sacrificed to Manchester. Cunliffe even sees that

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*LEADERS OF THE VICTORIAN REVOLUTION *by J. W. Cunliffe* (APPLETON-CENTURY. 343 pp. $3.00)

> The substitution of industrialism for agriculture and of democratic government for the authority of the landed aristocracy swept away some ancient oppressions and abuses, but it brought with it a loss apparently inevitable —a loss of beauty. . . . These pleasant rural scenes and picturesque villages were transformed into scarred hillsides, disfigured by great heaps of coal and pottery slag, polluted streams, masses of factory chimneys and long ugly streets of hideously monotonous cottages, so that the merry England of the Middle Ages became the "black England" of the nineteenth century.

But our praise must be faint enough to damn. These flashes of insight are all too rare, and though such facts are mentioned, they do not seem to be understood, or related to other pertinent facts. It is a very sloppy book, beginning with the choice of title. If the "Victorian Revolution" is, as the author defines it, one of "Industrialism and Science", then should we list John Henry Newman as one of its Leaders? It would be hard to imagine a history professor listing Metternich as a leader of the French Revolution. Or grant that the title is merely journalistic in the worst sense, and that the book really deals with the leaders and *opponents*, even then, just how are Joseph Conrad and William Butler Yeats "Leaders of the Victorian Revolution"? The fact that Cunliffe has attempted to do what no one has attempted before should not make us forget that he has failed; and the existence of many university courses beneath the level of this book cannot obscure the fact that this type of thing would be considered shameful in mediaeval or Renaissance studies. Yet, as long as our colleges of liberal arts fail to encourage Victorian study, we can expect the demand to be met by schools of journalism. To pursue our parallel, the level of knowledge represented by this book would mean a distinct improvement in the equipment of the average PH.D., would bring his ability to teach Victorian literature up to the level of his ability to teach Chaucer in an ordinary sophomore survey course. But of a professor teaching an advanced course on Chaucer, or writing a textbook on mediaeval culture, we could expect a knowledge of mediaeval Latin, or at least mediaeval French. Similarly a decent presentation of a real university course in Victorian literature would demand more understanding of the period than Cunliffe has made use of.

The kind of superficial acquaintance which picks up a few dates and ignores what is important is betrayed when he classifies Thomas Hardy as a Mid-Victorian. Even his own date for the borderline, 1880, which is a rather late one, would still show Hardy's important work to belong to a period later than Mid-Victorian. If, as we are told on the first page, the Victorian Revolution was "a far-off echo" of the French Revolution (Science? and Industry?) then we would expect some statement concerning the nature of Carlyle's *French Revolution* and its relation to what is ostensibly the subject of Cunliffe's book, for the relation is very important. Carlyle has his own contribution to make towards helping us understand our own age of Lenin-worship, Hitler-worship, Roosevelt-worship, Huey-worship, and Duce-worship, but that illumination is not transmitted by telling us that "his doctrine of hero-worship falls more and more into disrepute", unless Cunliffe means to say that the world outside New York is falling into disrepute. (Even New York has its Gertrude-Stein-worship, but Carlyle would probably feel that he had to draw a line somewhere.) The fault goes deeper than mere errors of fact. Cunliffe's failure to understand some very important men and movements would actually give the student the false impression that all roads through time, thought, and politics lead to John Dewey, and that the only important movement in the nineteenth century was the one carried by Macaulay (labelled "a sound guide"), Huxley, and Shaw. He considers it "Arnold's characteristic weakness" that his poems were "the productions of a scholar and a gentleman". (Does "weakness" characterize the poetry of the scholar Milton?) He does not show the Toryism of the early Oxford Movement, and he reproduces the conventional misinterpretation of the Kingsley-Newman episode. We are left with the impression that Ruskin was cracked — after all, Ruskin *is* rather embarrassing in the rôle of "leader" of an industrial revolution. One could read the book through and still think that "Tory Democracy" was a mere contradiction of terms!

I am not saying that Cunliffe should have given us an original interpretation — after all, few professors of Chaucer or of Shakespeare do that — but they do read what others are writing in their fields. While the study of Victorian literature by men in English departments has not advanced very far, it is possible to cure the narrow "Century of Progress" interpretation by turning to history, in the amusing books of Wingfield-Stratford; or social theory in the challenging work of Oswald Spengler; or criticism, in the volume *The Great Victorians*; or Continental study of our literature, as in the French Cazamian or the German Dibelius; or even to first-rate journalism, like that of Chesterton; and none of these men could be considered as writing only for specialists. It is hard to see how Cunliffe could ignore R. L. Hill's political study, *Toryism and the People, 1832-1846*, that in one short readable volume offers enough facts to blow to pieces the very foundations of Cunliffe's book, which is supposed to judge the Victorians "impartially in the light of what has since become known". And at the very least, we have a right to expect a more sympathetic reading of the writings of the great Victorians themselves, with something less of condescension and of the slap-dash retailing of irrelevant anecdotes.

Even the general reader who is merely keeping up with current non-fiction has at hand a test to show the shallowness of Cunliffe's conception. Lewis Mumford, in his *Technics and Civilization*, while he might agree that all roads lead to John Dewey, has a brilliant interpretation of Victorian England, as dominated by the mining psychology – to get rich quick while destroying the very basis of social wealth. Mumford recognizes the value, as Cunliffe does not, of Ruskin's opposition and insistence that "there is no wealth but Life". He finds a connection between the "carboniferous capitalism" and the aesthetic expression of the age – between the smoky fog of the cities and their paintings – between the industrial division of labour and the development of symphony.

But that brings us to the very heart of the age – something that Cunliffe never does. After all, the Victorian Age was not merely a preparation for us. And even to understand it as a preparation for the Present one must first do what we have shown Cunliffe failed to do: throw oneself sympathetically into the Past. And there are few rational pleasures more delightful. The bourgeois-genteel world of mid-nineteenth-century England is a world to itself, cut off from the lordly eighteenth century and the mass-minded twentieth, cut off from Europe ("The French wars made England insular.") and not yet conscious of a new Empire. Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope, take us into a human creation that has a beginning, a middle, and an end. It is a realm that will always hold its own special charm. "Thou hast thy music too!" For indeed it was not only a season of mists, but also of mellow fruitfulness.

I can well conceive the world turning wistfully in imagination, as to the culminating achievement of European culture, to the life of the University-bred classes in England of the mid-nineteenth century, set against the English landscape as it was, as it can be no more, but of which nevertheless some memorials remain with us today, in the garden at Kelmscott, in the hidden valleys of the Cotswolds, in that walled close where all the pride and piety, the peace and beauty of a vanished world seem to have made their last home under the spire of St. Mary of Salisbury.

This is from the last chapter in the Oxford *Early Victorian England*, by the editor, G. M. Young, who draws together the whole work and surveys the streams of thought and culture that the other chapters have not covered. If we want the double-distilled essence of the Victorian Age, we can turn back to these two handsome volumes issued by the Oxford University Press. Our interest is not confined to gentlefolk: J. H. Clapham writes a 74-page survey of "Work and Wages" and collaborates on the chapter concerning "Life in the New Towns". Allardyce Nicoll has a chapter on "The Theatre" (which is the title actually given in volume two; *not* on "Drama", the incorrect title used in the table of contents). Indeed, though "Art", "Architecture", "Music", and "The Press" have their chapters, there is no attempt to survey any branch of literature or philosophy. The purpose is rather to give the age as it felt from within to the man living then, not ignoring but not emphasizing those permanent monuments of creative genius which are "for all time". Consequently one of the most useful chapters is the pleasant one on "Country Life and Sport" by Bernard Darwin, and another is the encyclopaedic one on "Homes and Habits" by Mrs. C. S. Peel. We learn when "ink-making ceased to be a domestic task"; when phosphorous matches came into fashion and how they were ignited; and that candlesticks gradually faded out of middle-class life. Indeed – and this is no small praise for the thoroughness of the work – many a man has written historical novels with less than the wealth of information supplied by these two volumes. (And I have no doubt that as the Victorian Revival increases, novelists will arise to join those of us who like to wander in Victorian England.) Such a novelist would want to know when afternoon tea began to replace cakes and wine; and that his characters should ride in a coach in 1836, but on the railroad in 1848.

Second in value only to the accumulation of information is the series of fine plates, which give us the plastic sense of the age: We see "the baroque swagger" of the dandies; table glasses with stems as twisted as Ruskin's sentences; the squalid fascination of London streets; the charm of rural cottages; the princely grandeur of the country houses, whose standards of taste the so-called "revolution" did not destroy but diffused and transmitted to the rising middle class. There is one very noticeable defect in the work: those who are acquainted with the previous volumes *Shakespeare's England* and *Johnson's England* will be disappointed at the lack of bibliographies. The mention of these other titles raises the question why this was not given the title *Dickens's England*. The answer is doubtless that not only our Dickensian friends ride through the pages of *Early Victorian England*; we meet Jos. Sedley in Vauxhall Gardens, and also as an East-India fortune hunter who could use ships from the Thames ship-yards; indeed we come at every turn upon old friends or familiar scenes. And while we have here a wealth of detail as to taste, and habits, and daily environment, *Early Victorian England* is not merely photographic; it also analyzes attitudes and institutions. It is well suited to supply the social background necessary for an intelligent reading of Victorian literature – as Samuel Moore's *Historical Outlines of English Phonology and Morphology* is excellent to give a PH.D. a knowledge of Middle English – and it is my contention that the college student should be guided competently not only towards an understanding of Chaucer and *Piers Plowman* but also of Thackeray and the *Apologia Pro Vita Sua.*

For we have "the persistence of the religious interest into a secular age, aristocracy into a commercial age, and monarchy into a radical age", a phenomenon particularly English, that "cannot be expounded in European terms". It might be added that this was the nation and the age when it was found that an engineer could rise to the status of knight, industry receive the accolade of chivalry. And that is important. The age did not result in the complete defeat of religion, aristocracy, and handicraft, as the New York journalists seem to think. What failed to happen across the seas happened in England: "uncivilized moneygrubbers" came into contact with "other traditions" and found themselves "in a general national setting that corrected their complacency". Even after "the people" had won the Reform of 1832, the power merely shifted to the Whig lords, who, having been out of power for forty years, "in exile had drawn closer together and farther from the main stream of English life; they came from the eighteenth century when privilege was taken for granted and they brought the eighteenth century with them; and one result of the Reform was to give England, growing more and more resentful of privilege, the most aristocratic Government that anyone could remember. . . ." "The just influence of landed property was preserved, and the old humanity of the South was still politically ascendant over the new industry of the North." And though the triumph of Manchester laissez-faire in the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 spelled doom to "the agricultural interest" and perhaps to the "traditional structure, the traditional culture and morality of England" that had "inspired our poetry" and "controlled our art"; still, that doom was postponed for another generation, and the exploiters did not have their way unchallenged. "The Nonconformist clergy befriended the poor against the landowner; the Church clergy befriended the poor against the manufacturer." And by the time the landed aristocracy fell, a generation later, a new form of civilized society was being "evolved"– or to avoid a word that led astray the Century of Progress, was being *created* by dauntless men of good will.

It is a very wholesome warning to those who are exploring the nineteenth century that "we must be careful . . . not to view the early Victorian age of production through that distorting medium, the late Victorian age of finance". And as an example of such distortion: "Later Victorians, to whom Free Trade had become a habit of mind, tended almost instinctively to divide the century into the years before and after 1846" as if the turning-point were that victory for laissez-faire and industrialism – a Whiggish interpretation that still blinds those who are living yet in the Late Victorian Age. In reality a better turning-point was the Factory Act of 1847, which, with the Education and Public Health Acts of the same years, marks "the emergence of a new State philosophy" of civilized control. This analysis is penetrating, and shows a broad comprehension of the different currents that run through the century. It is to be contrasted with the conventional view which admires everything that labelled itself Reform, on the naïve assumption that public leaders can be divided into Villains who oppose change and Heroes who "spin forever down the ringing grooves of change". Cunliffe, for example, uses the words "new and better" as if mere novelty is proof of superiority. And Cunliffe by using the word "but" in the following sentence betrays his failure to understand what it was all about: he is listing three consistent cases of opposition to Manchester by "an Evangelical Peer, the Earl of Shaftesbury" (Ashley) who "had opposed the Reform Act and later opposed the repeal of the Corn Laws, *but* gave long years to the study of the condition of the wage earners and was largely instrumental in procuring legislation for their protection and the removal of such hideous abuses as are outlined above" (through the Ten Hours Act of 1847). Now if Ashley was opposed to laissez-faire in 1832, it should occasion no surprise that he was opposed to laissez-faire in 1847. Just what Revolution is Cunliffe writing about? It is like saying that a German leader opposed the Revolution of 1918 *but* supported the Revolution of 1932. Obviously the word should be *and*. Not to know this is to betray a dependence on labels rather than on thorough knowledge. And as to Ashley's opposition to the repeal of the Corn Laws, Cunliffe's sentence is very misleading: Ashley actually resigned his seat in Parliament rather than oppose Repeal, for though he hated all his life the economics of Manchester, he was confronted here with the emergency of the Irish famine and felt that he could not fight the battle he had been elected to fight.

It is by contrast with this superficiality that we recognize the competence of *Early Victorian Eng-*

land, which combines specific knowledge with broad reference and skill of presentation. An extensive quotation alone can illustrate how this carries us into the heart of the Victorian Age. The following passage, from G. M. Young's concluding chapter, brings us back to 1851 and the parallel with Chicago:

> Hudson, "Mammon and Belial in one", was nearing his apogee and his fall. The Midland and North-Eastern systems were under his control: he had carried the Sunderland election against Bright and Cobden in 1845, when *The Times* chartered a special train to bring the news of his return; his financial triumphs, his country houses, his parties in Albert Gate, his friendship with Prince Albert, gave him an almost legendary prestige. . . . But Hudson . . . kept one block of shares in demand by paying the dividends out of capital: with even greater simplicity he helped himself to others which did not appear in the books and sold them at a profit. Naturally he was the strenuous, and no doubt, the sincere, opponent of Government supervision; and naturally when the bubble burst, with a loss to the investor, it was reckoned, of nearly £80,000,000, the public attitude to Government supervision underwent some change.
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> In this atmosphere Fielden's Bill was finally carried . . . the debates mark at once the waning of the economics of pure calculation and the growth of that preoccupation with the quality of life which is dominant in the next decade. There is a remarkable passage in Peel's speech, in which he refers to the criticism of the Italian economists that their English colleagues concentrated on wealth and overlooked welfare. But he need not have gone to Italy for it. He could have heard it from Sadler and Southey [who, by the way, Cunliffe merely says "had long ago succumbed to reaction"!]: He could have read it as far back as 1832 in the *Quarterly Review*. This

> alternative economic was not thought out: it remained instinctive, sentimental, feudal, and the natural alliance of the scientific Benthamite administrator and the authoritative Tory gentleman was never fully achieved.
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> Mrs. Tonna's *Perils of the Nation* . . . undoubtedly represents a great body of educated opinion of, broadly speaking, a Tory Evangelical cast and furnishes a link between the Sadler-Ashley thought of the thirties and *Unto This Last* of 1860. . . . Directly, Carlyle contributed little; but the atmospheric effect of his insistence on personality, immaterial values, and leadership was immense. . . .

The study of modern problems in an age still living the century-old European way of life is worth serious attention now, when, in spite of our colleges, vast numbers of people are getting the impression that there are only two alternatives to choose between: predatory capitalism or destructive revolution – both enemies of peace, good will, and rich culture. There is a third alternative, and that is – to be civilized. And I know of no body of literature, except perhaps that of Ancient Athens, so well adapted as the Victorian to giving the modern American – student or layman – a lively understanding of what we mean by a civilized society, or for raising into his own consciousness those remnants of civilized tradition which have been shouted down but not yet obliterated by contemporary ballyhoo.

A Mild Remonstrance

G. K. CHESTERTON

I HOPE I shall not appear to pick a quarrel, when I think it only fair to answer a challenge, in the case of an organ with which I sympathize so much as I do with THE AMERICAN REVIEW. An organ so much concerned for justice, and in which neglected forms of justice like Distributism have often been expounded by Catholic writers, may perhaps allow a Catholic to protest against so very provocative a description of a Catholic social doctrine as that given by Mr. Robert Shafer in his second article on Dean Inge. Mr. Shafer mentions Birth-Prevention (absurdly called Birth-Control) and goes out of his way to say, "Certain of the Roman Catholic arguments against it – e.g., 'it is contrary to nature' – reach the height of absurdity and merit only derision." This is strong language about an ethical tradition that stretches from Aquinas to Maritain, and long before and after; and I think that one who has, by fairly hard thinking, reached the same height of absurdity as these thinkers, may be allowed to point out that the strong language is supported by very weak logic.

As this challenge, or rather taunt, is offered in the middle of an interesting and even enlightening eulogy of Dr. Inge, it is impossible not to pause first for a moment upon that justly celebrated name. It is not necessary here, however, to enter into all the perplexities of Mr. Shafer; for I think they are very easily resolved. He is slightly puzzled because Dr. Inge invokes the mystics, and even the ascetics, to prove that Christians should not concern themselves too much with corporal works of mercy, or practical charity and justice to the poor; and yet (strangely enough) Dr. Inge invokes the materialists and the most medical moderns to prove that practical philanthropy, in the form of various mutilations or enslavements, must prevail over all the old Christian scruples about delicacy or dignity. In short, it is only fair to say that if Dr. Inge supported sanctity against Christian charity, he was always ready to support utility against Christian decency. But I do not propose to dwell on this problem; for I think it has a perfectly simple solution. What is the matter with Dr. Inge, otherwise a most distinguished and luminous thinker, is that he has a fundamental hatred, not of Catholicism, but of Christianity. Of course he does not put it to himself in that form, and is, therefore, in good faith; but that is the only form which has any relation to the fact. He is not a Modernist, in the modern sense; the vague and rather vulgar sense which means misunderstanding this or that doctrine, and therefore calling it a dogma. His heresy is not anything so silly as discovering with a start that the Trinity is a mystery, or that the Sacraments are materialized mysteries. His heresy is quite simply this; that he thinks Pride is a virtue and Humility is a vice. And as the one great difference made in the morals of a good Pagan, when he became a good Christian, was the discovery that the humility of Christ was higher than the pride of Cato, Dr. Inge has remained a good Pagan. That explains with one word all the inconsistencies that trouble Mr. Shafer; and makes them consistent. It furnishes the same simple motive for following the mystics who would escape from the mob, and for following the materialists who would control the mob. Such a man would willingly talk with Buddha in a cave or with Galton in a laboratory; for both are obviously superior to somebody slaving among filthy Negroes, like Peter Claver, or (for that matter) among tolerably filthy Jews, like Jesus Christ. Nobody has hated more than I the pacifist heresy, "Nothing is worse than death"; but if anybody will apply the real original pagan heresy, "Nothing is worse than humiliation", he will completely understand the whole career of Dr. Inge, and apologize to that lucid and sincere man for any charges of inconsistency.

As the next step in approaching the question, let me quote only one example of Mr. Shafer's quotations. He seems seriously impressed with Dr. Inge's grotesque remark that Eugenics is Christian, or almost that Eugenics is Christianity, because the Dean quoted the text about the impossibility of gathering grapes from thorns or figs from thistles. Now to me this seems a specially shallow example of the old sectarian trick, of sniping out texts and blacking out contexts. Obviously, to anyone who has read the Gospel as one reads a book, this is merely an extension of the repeated advice about action; "He that heareth my words and doeth them". If it is controversial at all, it asserts the Catholic doctrine of Faith and Good Works against the Protestant doctrine of Faith even without Works. But if there is one thing which Christ quite obviously and glaringly did *not* believe, it is the grape-and-thorn argument in the only sense which could possibly be connected with Eugenics. For that could only mean that if you are born a thorn, you cannot become a vine; in other words, that men have no more choice than vegetables. If anybody says *that* is in the Gospels, he is incapable of reading any ordinary book. The whole subject of these books is Repentance; the idea that the sinner may yet be the saint and the superior of the ordinary righteous man. Harlots and thieves were obviously thorns and thistles, in Dr. Inge's survey of nature; and if the Gospel story does not mean that harlots can become saints, and thieves go straight to Paradise, it has no possible meaning of any sort. But, on the principle I have suggested, there is no difficulty in explaining why Dr. Inge should search the Scriptures till he finds one text that can be twisted into a Calvinistic notion that nobody can alter himself from a thistle to a fig-tree. In short, there is nothing the matter with Dr. Inge, except that it has never even crossed his mind that he might be a thistle.

These things being so, there is no reason to be surprised at Dr. Inge supporting Birth-Prevention (absurdly called Birth-Control); for he was always quite incapable of imagining himself as one of the people whose birth might have been prevented. But there is some cause for mild and reasonable surprise, when a writer in THE AMERICAN REVIEW dismisses with "derision", his own phrase, the objection to Birth-Prevention (absurdly called Birth-Control) which was once common to all Christians, and is now common to all Catholics. Perhaps the world is divided into those who laugh first and think afterwards, and those who think first and laugh afterwards. But about the actual Catholic argument, it is clear that Mr. Shafer has laughed first and not (so far) thought at all. He really seems to suppose that when we call Birth-Prevention (absurdly called Birth-Control) anti-natural, we only mean an action modifying or diverting natural forces, as do all the actions of men. He actually uses the parallel, "it is no more contrary to nature, in any legitimate sense of that word, than is artificial illumination". A little hard on us, whose cathedrals crowded with flaming candles have always been a scandal and a reproach to us, because such illumination is so very artificial.

Now I do my best, but I have very great difficulty in believing that a man like Mr. Shafer thinks that all Catholics are half-witted. And they would have to have less than half their natural wits not to see that cutting down a tree or lighting a torch is against nature, in the sense that something else would have happened if men had done something else. In that sense, we are really capable of realizing that light is artificial and that night is natural. In short, we have in two thousand years of thought got as far in Biblical Criticism as to know the answer to the great sceptical question, "Where was Moses when the light went out?" But when we say that Birth-Prevention (absurdly called Birth-Control) is "against nature", we mean something quite different, in the language of a moral philosophy of which Mr. Shafer seems never to have heard. We mean that it is against what Catholics call the Natural Law; that is the right reason in things which man with his unaided reason can see to be right. And the chief reason for saying so, though there are several others, is that the right reason of man in any case rebels against the idea of taking something that has a purpose, and a great purpose, and twisting it to serve a smaller purpose. For a short explanation of the principle, I could ask nothing better than Mr. Shafer's extraordinary parallel of artificial illumination. Birth-Prevention (absurdly called Birth-Control) is exactly the opposite of a thing like lighting torches or candles or street-lamps. It is not having a large and luminous purpose, and then inventing engines to serve that purpose. It is taking a gigantic engine, that does already serve a large and luminous purpose, and twisting and wrecking it so that it shall only serve a smaller and more selfish purpose. If he wants a parallel between light and this freak of darkness, I can easily give it to him. Catholics, like other people, are in the habit of setting up lamp-posts along the streets of modern towns. It has not yet dawned on their feeble minds that they are interfering with nature, by interfering with night. Now suppose somebody were to say, "Cut off all the electricity or gas from all these lamps; there are pleasanter uses for lamp-posts." A drunkard can embrace a lamp-post, in a dream of joy in which he seems to be in a forest of lamp-posts. There are towns in which the lamp-posts are painted pink or pea-green with elvish artistry; and some in which they are picked out with such complicated stripes and spots, for a guide to motorists, that they look as if they were gigantic sugar-sticks invented by insane children. If somebody said that lamp-posts only exist for the lunatic to paint or for the drunkard to dream under – *that* would be a parallel to Birth-Prevention (absurdly called Birth-Control). If somebody said that lamp-posts do not exist for lamps, or that lamps do not exist for light – *that* would be a parallel to Birth-Prevention (absurdly called Birth-Control). For there is no reason why there should not be other legitimate pleasures connected with the main purpose; and not merely provided for drunkards or lunatics. I am all in favour of painting lamp-posts with pretty colours, and even fantastic colours; I am all in favour of leaning against lamp-posts and dreaming dreams; and I have often done it. But if anybody says that lamp-posts are to be deprived of their main function, and altered to serve these merely subjective functions; then I say it is "against nature", in the sense of being against the natural sequence of cause and effect and the right reason of things.

Now there is one word which everybody seems to have blankly forgotten, in incessantly talking about Birth-Prevention (absurdly called Birth-Control); and that word is Birth. It is notable that we never hear from any one of the reformers any word of wonder or appreciation or adequate reaction towards the most stupendous incident of human experience. It is from any point of view, but especially from the Humanist, the heroic, the classic, or the objective point of view, an immeasurably grander thing to add a life to the universe than to add a love-affair to the life of a rather irresponsible and self-indulgent free-lover. To this great triumph God has added a great joy; and it is absolutely and wholly right that this joy should be enjoyed. But it is not in the least ridiculous or irrational to say that there is something unnatural, to our instincts and our intellect, in filching the joy while carefully shirking the triumph. It rests upon exactly the same sort of natural law, in the common conscience, which makes sexual perversion act on the sane imagination like an emetic. What makes the city of Sodom still stink under the Dead Sea is, ultimately, that it is a contradiction in terms. It denies sex in the act of pursuing sexuality. What is meant by calling this other perversion unnatural is that it is in the same really fundamental sense irrational. It preserves the songs and feasting of the harvest-home by arranging that there shall be no harvest. It brings more presents to the birthday-party by arranging that there shall be no birth. There are, of course, all sorts of practical arguments and counter-arguments with which I am not concerned here; though I am quite ready to deal with them anywhere. I only write here to point out that there is a principle involved that rises rather higher than the height of absurdity; and if Mr. Shafer is still content merely to "deride" it, we can only suggest that it also goes rather deeper than his derision.

The Vitality of George Gissing

ROBERT SHAFER

GISSING's fiction indisputably possesses a vitality which has given the man a secure position amongst the nine or ten English novelists of the nineteenth century who wrote not alone for their own time or place. Interest in Gissing has been very active continuously since his death in December, 1903, and has, indeed, notably increased in recent years. This is attested not only by animated critical discussion but, more impressively, by a steady growing demand for his books. About seventeen of these either have been kept in print continuously since their first publication or have been reprinted, some of them in more than one edition and on both sides of the Atlantic, during the last ten or fifteen years. Such a fact speaks plainly enough for itself; though it does not mean that Gissing, never in his lifetime a popular writer, is at all likely now or in the future to become the object of extremely widespread eager acclamation.

When *Workers in the Dawn* appeared in 1880 – the first of Gissing's novels to achieve publication, although not the first to be written – it found certainly less than fifty readers, including the reviewers. These gentlemen found little in it worthy of their attention, some condemning it severely for its crudity, others for subversive tendencies they discovered in it. Amongst readers, however, there were at least two, Frederic Harrison and John Morley, who thought it extraordinarily powerful despite all artistic shortcomings. They were in fact so struck by the downright genuineness of the novel that they exerted themselves to do everything they could for the rather strange young man – he was then not quite twenty-three years old – who had written it; and Frederic Harrison really set him on his feet, rescuing him from something close to gradual starvation and giving him a means of livelihood with leisure not merely for a somewhat human way of life but for continued writing as well.

The circumstance is worth recalling, because it is fairly typical of Gissing's whole career, and also of his posthumous fortunes. He wrote in all twenty-five novels (though three of these were never printed), a great many short stories, the best critical study of Dickens that we have or are likely ever to have, a set of critical introductions to Dickens's novels, a wholly delightful volume of travel sketches, and a book defying classification by which he is now, I suppose, most widely known, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft.* And throughout the quarter of a century while these many books were being composed and published, he had a slowly growing audience impressed by his work very much as Frederic Harrison and Morley had been – feeling that here was a fine and sensitive intelligence succeeding against odds in the creation of powerfully conceived and executed pictures of life, pictures evidently authentic, perhaps imperishable, certainly challenging, whose dark significance could not be denied or belittled. Probably no one ever thought that the truth mirrored by Gissing could be received by the generality of readers; but that an audience was gradually found and was kept is proved by the fact that after *Workers in the Dawn* Gissing published no book which did not pay its way and yield some profit, and that after his first ten years of work he had a solid reputation which brought him during the remainder of his life more proposals from publishers than he could take up.

One may say, of course, that here is evidence of modest commercial success but not, necessarily, of anything else; and it is true that though Gissing, during his lifetime and since, has had devoted champions amongst critics, he has also had critical enemies, who have insisted that his books are worthless or worse, that his novels prove he was not a novelist, whatever he was, and that they are really dead and should be buried. Thus, to take the latest instance which has come to hand of the reaction dictated by reigning prejudices, Mr. H. G. Wells, who was a personal friend of Gissing during the last seven years of the latter's life, has dedicated some pages to a brief account of the man in his *Experiment in Autobiography*, published towards the end of 1934; and this is the kind of thing he says:

> The Gissing I knew . . . was an extraordinary blend of a damaged joy-loving human being hampered by inherited gentility and a classical education. He craved to laugh, jest, enjoy, stride along against the wind, shout, "quaff mighty flagons". But his upbringing . . . had been one of repressive gentility, where "what will the neighbours *think* of us?" was more terrible than the thunder of God. The insanity of our educational organization had . . . poured into that fresh and vigorous young brain nothing but classics and a "scorn" for nonclassical things. Gissing's imagination, therefore, escaped

from the cramping gentilities and respectability of home to find its compensations in the rhetorical swagger, the rotundities and the pompous grossness of Rome. He walked about . . . in love with goddesses and nymphs and excited by ideas of patrician freedoms in a world of untouchable women. . . . Gissing was a Latin, oratorical and not scientific, unanalytical, unsubtle and secretly haughty. He accepted and identified himself with all the pretensions of Rome's triumphal arches. . . . Some of his books will be read for many generations, but because of this warping of his mind they will find fewer lovers than readers. . . . Through Gissing I was confirmed in my suspicion that . . . orthodox classical training . . . is . . . no longer a city of refuge from barbaric predispositions. . . . That disposition to get away from entangling conditions which is manifest in almost every type of imaginative worker, accumulated in his case to quite desperate fugitive drives. . . . Perhaps Gissing was made to be hunted by Fate. He never turned and fought. He always hid or fled. . . . He was a pessimistic writer. He spent his big fine brain depreciating life, because he would not and perhaps could not look life squarely in the eyes—neither his circumstances nor the conventions about him nor the adverse things about him nor the limitations of his personal character.

Mr. Wells sinks into unwonted hesitation at the close of his sketch, confessing that he does not know whether it was nature or the insanities of classical education which ruined Gissing's "big fine brain". Mr. Wells's monstrous and sometimes amusing prejudices, which throughout, as I have intimated above, are more in evidence than any true observation of his friend, strongly incline him to accuse education; yet he refers with unqualified approval to Mr. Frank Swinnerton's critical study of Gissing, where the trouble with the poor fellow is ascribed to egotism "of a particular kind". Gissing, Mr. Swinnerton says, was "temperamentally unhappy":

> He did not love his fellow men. He had suffered much, and he was, during the greater part of his life, expressing his suffering in terms of his distaste. For that reason, although he is often mentioned by those who write about novels, he is not very much read by the fashionable; and indeed at the present time I believe the greatest readers of his books are to be found less among those who can appreciate their value than among those who find in the novels an expression of their own bitter and egotistical hostility to life. He is thus, if I am right, helping discontent to arise in the mediocre. It is not that he had any liking for mediocrity – he hated it; nor that his books are addressed to stupid people. But in the nature of things his books will be increasingly read by ill-educated egoists, because they voice numerous dislikes – of the vulgar herd, of conventional Christians, and so on – which are capable of flattering a sense of superiority in mis-cultured readers. The ideas he expressed have, as it were, percolated through the strata of intellectual and intelligent people, and they are now food for the agitated lower middle-class. Accordingly, it is among members of that class that Gissing is at present finding his most constant readers.

Neither Mr. Wells nor Mr. Swinnerton is unable to see *any* merit or enduring value in Gissing's work, but both of them, it will be agreed, are far indeed from a German critic and historian of English literature who has declared that next to Thomas Hardy, Gissing is the most significant man of letters to be found in England in the latter part of the nineteenth century.* And this German critic's verdict is only one in a long series scarcely less favourable which could be cited from England, from the United States, and from continental Europe; while I myself, if I may say so, believe that Gissing is a more significant and, in a real sense, more important writer than Hardy, though far below him as an artist.

Now a sharp conflict of critical opinion, such as Gissing has occasioned and still occasions, is itself no uncertain indication of vitality in a man's books, giving them a power which may attract or repel, but which cannot be ignored. There was, to take the most celebrated instance, a long critical battle over Shakespeare. Many writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries spoke of him with strong disapproval, some of them believing practically what Mr. Swinnerton today believes of Gissing – that Shakespeare, if he continued long to have any appeal, could attract only the vulgar and ill-educated kind of reader.

Gissing, however, was no second Shakespeare; and in this transparent fact we discover the real critical problem which he forces upon us. Gissing's insight was very far from universal; his imagination was neither easily kindled, nor bold, nor sure; he had none of that exuberant energy which sparkles from the pages of *Romeo and Juliet*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It*, and which still glows, subdued but intense and magnificent, in *Othello* and *Hamlet*; he brings before his readers no thronging gallery of characters of every kind and rank, impelling them to feel that here is God's plenty, here is all humanity in its richness and greatness and wonder and absurdity and misery. In fact Gissing was almost always a very imperfect, and always a very limited artist, with a small canvas, with not many colours – and those not the most striking or vivid – with a blunt pencil which sometimes failed to do his bidding, and with an eye which saw truly only a few kinds of people, and which saw during the greater part of his career predominantly the more grim and misery-provoking aspects of existence. He himself in *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* suggested that "one might define Art as an expression, satisying and abiding, of the zest of life". But, as Mr. Paul More has remarked, by this standard not one of Gissing's novels could be regarded as a successful work of art. Generally speaking, the atmosphere of the novels is one of dreariness and defeat, and Gissing seems to be animated by disgust and contempt rather than by anything even remotely like the zest of life. In saying above that his novels cannot be expected ever to become popular, howsoever highly they may be valued, I had in mind this fact, that they present us with little matter for spontaneous enjoyment, and with much that is calculated to depress and sadden us, and to make us wonder whether life itself may not be irremediably senseless and hopeless.

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* B. Fehr, *Die Englische Literatur des XIX und XX Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, 1923.

Clearly then Mr. Wells and Mr. Swinnerton and others who have joined them in the indictment of Gissing can make out a strong case; and indeed Gissing was beforehand with them and by anticipation himself agreed with their verdict. It was he who first said that he was a faltering artist and a novelist only under compulsion; and a year before his death he wrote in a letter, with reference to *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*: "On the whole I suspect it is the best thing I have done or am likely to do; the thing most likely to last when all my other futile work has followed my futile life." This conviction of failure or defeat can, as we shall see, be explained, and does not rightly mean what it seems to. Nevertheless, there it is, rendering only the more complex and insistent the problem of accounting for Gissing's vitality.

II

In attempting the task it is needful first to turn to the book I have already referred to several times, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*. This is a work of fiction, and Ryecroft, the ostensible writer, is not Gissing; yet Gissing here, as in a number of his novels, drew heavily upon his own experience and gave form to his own thought. Hence it is possible, and in this case neither difficult nor hazardous, to unweave the fabric and so to obtain a picture, incomplete but authentic as far as it goes, of the kind of man Gissing became by the time he was about forty years old.

The dominant characteristic of the volume is its serenity. The man not obscurely reflected in its pages is at peace with himself and with the world; tranquilly accepting life as it comes, almost as a disinterested spectator; detached from nearly every worldly concern that harasses or enslaves the great majority of us; yet not stupidly or coldly indifferent; keenly delighted, on the contrary, by even the simplest of the fair aspects of nature, of humanity, of civilization; frankly in love with the southern English countryside, and indeed with all things genuinely and honestly English, not degraded, as he thinks English life and the English character are being degraded, by the corrupt influence of industrialism. His love for honest English cooking is unqualified and touching, in fact almost convincing. And he is strongly of the right mind about vegetarianism. In the literature of this subject, he says, there is "an odd pathos":

> I remember the day when I read these periodicals and pamphlets with all the zest of hunger and poverty, vigorously seeking to persuade myself that flesh was an altogether superfluous, and even a repulsive, food. If ever such things fall under my eyes nowadays, I am touched with a half-humorous compassion for the people whose necessity, not their will, consents to this chemical view of diet. There comes before me a vision of certain vegetarian restaurants, where, at a minim outlay, I have often enough made believe to satisfy my craving stomach; where I have swallowed "savoury cutlet", "vegetable steak", and I know not what windy insufficiencies tricked up under specious names. One place do I recall where you had a complete dinner for sixpence – I dare not try to remember the items. But well indeed do I see the faces of the guests – poor clerks and shopboys, bloodless girls and women of many sorts – all endeavouring to find a relish in lentil soup and haricot something-or-other. It was a grotesquely heart-breaking sight.
>
> I hate with a bitter hatred the names of lentils and haricots – those pretentious cheats of the appetite, those tabulated humbugs, those certificated aridities calling themselves human food! An ounce of either, we are told, is equivalent to – how many pounds? – of the best rumpsteak. There are not many ounces of common sense in the brain of him who proves it, or of him who believes it. In some countries, this stuff is eaten by choice; in

England only dire need can compel to its consumption. Lentils and haricots are not merely insipid; frequent use of them causes something like nausea. Preach and tabulate as you will, the English palate — which is the supreme judge — rejects this farinaceous makeshift. Even as it rejects vegetables without the natural concomitant of meat; as it rejects oatmeal-porridge and griddle-cakes for a mid-day meal; as it rejects lemonade and ginger-ale as substitutes for honest beer.

What is the intellectual and moral state of that man who really believes that chemical analysis can be an equivalent for natural gusto? — I will get more nourishment out of an inch of right Cambridge sausage; aye, out of a couple of ounces of honest tripe; than can be yielded me by half a hundredweight of the best lentils ever grown.

One may just suspect the posturer in the turn of some of these sentences, but the suspicion would be worse than unkind — it would be wholly wrongheaded. We have here our man to the life, speaking from knowledge, as we do again when Gissing is carried on by a natural progression from meat and vegetables to butter. "The deterioration of English butter", he says, "is one of the worst signs of the moral state of our people." He intends no paradox of the kind the solid Englishman likes well enough to make him tolerant of wild Irishmen. He speaks in earnest, and the declaration on butter introduces a reasonable argument — reasonable and urbanely phrased, but expressive of deep feeling.

This comes close to the heart of what I am concerned to bring out. The Gissing revealed in *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* is a man who has achieved peace by the acquisition of steady common sense, which does not stifle, but merely directs and controls, a native sturdy independence and a native fund of deep and true feeling. He is cultivated – that is, he has absorbed much of the past, and has discovered himself and enriched himself – and chastened himself too – by his response to "the best that has been thought and said in the world". Thus he has bound himself to the larger or spiritual life of the race by the only social ties a man can accept with the certainty that they will never gall or strangle him, but will infallibly bring him to the fullest humanity of which he is capable. And though cultivation has detached him from the merely contemporary and the merely immediate interests which tyrannically imprison most of us, it has not robbed him of sympathy. Mr. Swinnerton would have been correct and, indeed, a servant of light, had he said that Gissing "did not love his fellow men" *indiscriminately*. He was certainly not long guilty of the self-deception required in order to conjure up a false sympathy for "man-in-general", and his unqualified love and allegiance were in fact reserved for qualities, for spiritual values, as they are now often called; but this only means that the sympathy he did feel for actual fellow men was honest and true – and for such sympathy Gissing had a real though not unlimited capacity. It was, however, not because of deficient sympathy, but directly because he could and did "look life squarely in the eyes", and was not blinded by a sham abstract "sympathy" or by prejudice, that he finally turned away from humanitarianism and socialism. The Gissing of *The Private Papers* has long been convinced that men are not by nature equal, that some are better than others, that there is a natural aristocracy of intellect and feeling and character, and that the aristocratic principle is the only sound basis of social organization, because it is the only one which conforms to the unalterable given facts of life. And consistently with this he has also faced and accepted the fact that real education can be received only by a few in each generation, and that the mass of half-educated or quarter-educated people in our time constitute simply an unprecedented menace to civilization, their wind-blown self-sufficiency coming back upon them as well as upon all of us as a cruelly ironic curse.

Such conclusions, of course, cannot be expected to become popular, but neither they nor any others set forth in *The Private Papers* are indicative of the "abysmal selfishness" of which Gissing has sometimes been accused. The following passage fairly, and plainly enough, elucidates the critical attitude which can be mistaken for a selfish or anti-social position by the hasty and prejudiced reader:

> All men my brothers? Nay, thank Heaven that they are not! I will do harm, if I can help it, to no one; I will wish good to all; but I will make no pretence of personal kindliness where, in the nature of things, it cannot be felt. I have grimaced a smile and pattered unmeaning words to many a person whom I despised or from whom in heart I shrank; I did so because I had not courage to do otherwise. For a man conscious of such weakness, the best is to live apart from the world. Brave Samuel Johnson! One such truth-teller is worth all the moralists and preachers who ever laboured to humanize mankind. Had *he* withdrawn into solitude, it would have been a national loss. Every one of his blunt, fearless words had

> more value than a whole evangel on the lips of a timidly good man. It is thus that the commonalty, however well clad, should be treated. So seldom does the fool or the ruffian in broadcloth hear his just designation; so seldom is the man found who has the right to address him by it. By the bandying of insults we profit nothing; there can be no useful rebuke which is exposed to a *tu quoque*. But, as the world is, an honest and wise man should have a rough tongue.

Obviously, though none of us may *like* to think so, this is realistic common sense; and it is noteworthy that as Gissing attained it he was drawn to Dr. Johnson; – with whom, for instance, he shared a just appreciation of the material basis upon which everything good in life rests. In true Johnsonian vein he says:

> You tell me that money cannot buy the things most precious. Your commonplace proves that you have never known the lack of it. When I think of all the sorrow and the barrenness that has been wrought in my life by want of a few more pounds per annum than I was able to earn, I stand aghast at money's significance. . . . I think it would scarce be an exaggeration to say that there is no moral good which has not to be paid for in coin of the realm.

And despite Gissing's lack of Dr. Johnson's burly assertiveness in social intercourse, his inward perceptions were straight and true, and exhibit in the realm of thought a right Johnsonian sensibleness, enlightened and heartening. Two more examples must be quoted. Gissing, or Ryecroft, tells how he stood one day watching harvesters at work, until "a foolish envy took hold upon him". He continues:

There comes the old idle dream: balance of mind and body, perfect physical health combined with the fulness of intellectual vigour. Why should I not be there in the harvest field, if so it pleased me, yet none the less live for thought? Many a theorist holds the thing possible, and looks to its coming in a better time. If so, two changes must needs come before it: there will no longer exist a profession of literature, and all but the whole of every library will be destroyed. . . .

It is idle to talk to us of "the Greeks". The people we mean when so naming them were a few little communities, living under very peculiar conditions, and endowed by Nature with most exceptional characteristics. The sporadic civilization which we are too much in the habit of regarding as if it had been no less stable than brilliant, was a succession of the briefest splendours, gleaming here and there from the coasts of the Aegean to those of the western Mediterranean. Our heritage of Greek literature and art is priceless; the example of Greek life possesses for us not the slightest value. The Greeks had nothing alien to study—not even a foreign or a dead language. They read hardly at all, preferring to listen. They were a slave-holding people, much given to social amusement, and hardly knowing what we call industry. Their ignorance was vast, their wisdom a grace of the gods. Together with their fair intelligence, they had grave moral weaknesses. If we could see and speak with an average Athenian of the Periclean age, he would cause no little disappointment—there would be so much more of the barbarian in him, and at the same time of the decadent, than we had anticipated. More than possibly, even his physique would be a disillusion. Leave him in that old world, which is precious to the imagination of a few, but to the business and bosoms of the modern multitude irrelevant as Memphis or Babylon.

No unlearned man, no man who was not himself a classical scholar of parts, could have written these words; but equally no man could have reached these conclusions who was intimidated either by learning or by convention. And the same independent clear-sightedness is the distinguishing characteristic of the following remarkable passage:

> I wonder whether there are many men who have the same feeling with regard to "science" as I have? It is something more than a prejudice; often it takes the form of a dread, almost a terror. Even those branches of science which are concerned with things that interest me — which deal with plants and animals and the heaven of stars — even these I cannot contemplate without uneasiness, a spiritual disaffection; new discoveries, new theories, however they engage my intelligence, soon weary me, and in some way depress. When it comes to other kinds of science — the sciences blatant and ubiquitous — the science by which men become millionaires — I am possessed with an angry hostility, a resentful apprehension. This was born in me, no doubt; I cannot trace it to circumstances of my life, or to any particular moment of my mental growth. My boyish delight in Carlyle doubtless nourished the temper, but did not Carlyle so delight me because of what was already in my mind? I remember, as a lad, looking at complicated machinery with a shrinking uneasiness which, of course, I did not understand; I remember the sort of disturbed contemptuousness with which, in my time of "examinations", I dismissed "science papers". It is intelligible enough to me now, that unformed fear: the ground of my antipathy has grown clear enough. I hate and fear "science" because of my conviction that, for long to come if not for ever, it will be the remorseless enemy of mankind. I see

it destroying all simplicity and gentleness of life, all the beauty of the world; I see it restoring barbarism under a mask of civilization; I see it darkening men's minds and hardening their hearts; I see it bringing a time of vast conflicts, which will pale into insignificance "the thousand wars of old", and, as likely as not, will whelm all the laborious advances of mankind in blood-drenched chaos.

Yet to rail against it is as idle as to quarrel with any other force of nature. For myself, I can hold apart, and see as little as possible of the thing I deem accursed. But I think of some who are dear to me, whose life will be lived in the hard and fierce new age. . . . Oh, the generous hopes and aspirations of forty years ago! Science, then, was seen as the deliverer; only a few could prophesy its tyranny, could foresee that it would revive old evils and trample on the promises of its beginning. This is the course of things; we must accept it. But it is some comfort to me that I – poor little mortal – have had no part in bringing the tyrant to his throne.

Though all the evidence, it seems to me, is on his side, here no less than when he is speaking of "the Greeks", Gissing is so far from the irrational hopefulness which we cherish in ourselves and encourage in each other that I should have hesitated to quote this passage had it not been too characteristic to be omitted. I fancy, however, there are more now than there were thirty years ago, or even ten years ago, who can discern a sober wisdom in Gissing's hostility to applied science; and I am encouraged in this supposition by a pronouncement of Dr. Bronislaw Malinowski, the great anthropologist of the University of London, which accidentally comes to hand as I write, and shows that in his own way Dr. Malinowski has reached very much the same conclusions as Gissing.* Thus it appears likely that here as elsewhere in his reflections Gissing expresses, not indeed the common sense of his generation, nor of ours, but the larger, deeper common sense of the race, the true consensus of enlightened, chastened minds on the question of human living.

And though the picture I have drawn is a bare enough outline, and nothing less than a reading of *The Private Papers* can suffice to bring out the full quality of the mature man so pleasingly revealed there, still, what has been quoted and said should enable us to recognize his unpretentiousness, his cultivation and restrained independence and sanity, his disillusioned yet not unfeeling serenity, his sweetness, and his firm simple decency. I particularly want to draw attention to the fact that he is thoughtful without being a "Thinker", or a "Constructive Thinker". One friendly critic of Gissing has lamented this intellectual modesty, apparently believing it a pity that he failed to elaborate some new kind of philosophy, like George Meredith for example;** but it seems to me that this contentment with the rôle of the critical observer and inquirer is one real though negative reason for his vitality. Despite all of Meredith's brilliance and fire, which Gissing did not share, his novels are fading away into the realm of the "historically important" document at the same time that Gissing's are coming to be thought more interesting and valuable because of their continuing pertinence. Meredith's so-called philosophy already seems shallow, a construction hurriedly run up to meet very temporary conditions and now gaping at every joint. At a forced auction I believe it would scarcely bring a tenth of its one-time valuation. Gissing, saved by modesty and scepticism from a life-long effort to build a new house of cards, went more quietly and simply about the artist's true business, with the consequence that though his novels too are historical documents, they have their basis in life rather than in problems, and so have a perennial human interest transcending the local and passing conditions and questions to which they owe their outer form.

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* Dr. Malinowski is quoted in the Cincinnati *Times-Star* of 27 April, 1935, as saying: "I don't believe in progress! We have overloaded ourselves with technical inventions – and erroneously think that means progress. Many a modern moron whirls his car through space at the rate of a hundred miles an hour and foolishly imagines he has progressed vastly over such ancients as Plato and Aristotle – if he ever even heard of them – who could go no more than three miles an hour. Indeed our civilization will have to throw overboard some of its destructive technical inventions or it will annihilate itself."

** May Yates: *George Gissing, An Appreciation*, p. 101.

So also in *The Private Papers* Gissing gives us beyond all else the revelation of a man. And this is why the book must be read through for its full effect, even though it abounds in quotable passages which are also very revealing – such as the one where Ryecroft is made to tell how it was a mental peculiarity of his as a school-boy "that at five o'clock in the morning he could apply himself with gusto to mathematics, a subject loathsome to him at any other time of the day". Mr. Frank Swinnerton, perversely looking at the *Papers* as a collection of "thoughts", is puzzled when he considers the love readers have felt for the book, very like the love felt for Boswell's *Life of*

Johnson. He complains that the thoughts are really not striking or extraordinary, and that if the book as a whole were not primarily the disclosure of a personality some parts of it would not, as he rather mysteriously says, have any value at all.

I am anxious not to attribute to Gissing any value that he does not have, and I will agree to the justice of Mr. Swinnerton's depreciation whenever it is shown that unpretentious right-mindedness and decency and balance, organically united in a very human figure, are banal and insignificant. There is, to be sure, a rather widespread opinion, not at all peculiar to our time, though taken more seriously than in some former ages, that only human freaks of one kind or another can have absorbing interest for us, so that the study of literature and of life tends to be accommodated to the level of those who find their pleasure and appropriate instruction in the side-shows of a circus. Gissing is not for them. The true meaning of Gissing's life and work, and the secret of his vitality, can be summed up by saying that he himself did indeed begin life as a species of freak, determined to go his own way in his own fashion and act out his sacred impulses regardless of the world, but that he was capable of learning from experience, and thus very gradually re-formed himself, until at last he attained the full, sane humanity reflected in *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft.* Hence it is that in order to understand Gissing it is not alone necessary to know this book, but necessary equally to contemplate it in the light of its far background. Gissing's wavering but real growth or development, indeed, from his young manhood to the time of *The Private Papers*, is that which gives the book its deepest significance — and that which makes Gissing himself a subject of continuing vital interest.

III

At the age of sixteen Gissing entered Owens College, at Manchester. His father had died several years earlier; his mother never exerted any positive influence over him; and his brothers and sisters were all younger than he, and not blessed or cursed with any unusual talent or intellectual capacity. His family lived in the village of Wakefield, where he was born and where he early gave evidence of extraordinary love of knowledge and of extraordinary powers for its acquisition. At school he won practically every prize which he tried to obtain, and in 1872 he was ranked first amongst all those in England who took the Oxford local examinations. After his father's death, the boy's only hope of completing his education rested upon his ability to win a scholarship, but this he easily did, though it only took him to Manchester — not Oxford, not Cambridge.

Under all the circumstances it would have been surprising had Gissing's career at school not raised up in him a little youthful arrogance, and there is in fact evidence to show that from boyhood on he was very conscious of his intellectual superiority. This consciousness was practically his only resource, moreover, when he was set free to shift for himself in Manchester. The college was young, had almost no corporate social existence, and made no demands upon its members outside of the lecture-room and the examination-hall. And Gissing had no friends, no one whom he knew even slightly, either in the city or at the college, when he went there. He stood up well for a time under loneliness, without guidance, spurred only by the desire to excel, and at the close of his first year carried off many prizes as usual. There is a picture of him doing so in the opening chapter of one of the best and strongest of his novels, *Born in Exile*. But in the following year he fell in with a young prostitute who had a pathetic story, doubtless true enough, and who succeeded in awakening his compassion. Becoming attached to her, he determined to rescue her from her shameful life and to bring her back to self-respect. He even determined to marry her when this result should be accomplished.

In forming these designs Gissing was merely acting on a conviction which was in the nineteenth century and is today very commonly entertained—a conviction in terms of which much of our social activity is now organized, and one upon whose basis many think they see a new and better religion arising, to replace the shabby and childish Christianity of the ages of pre-scientific faith. For the youthful Gissing assumed that all his poor girl lacked was the mere opportunity to be decent and good. Give her but a chance, he said, and she will go straight. Her fault is not her own; – it has been imposed upon her by a cruel and heartless society. Set right the social order, and you will discover this girl, or any other like her, blossoming as a pure and tender flower. The one crucial difference between the Gissing of this time and the average humanitarian was that he was not able to believe something without acting upon it immediately, consistently, and whole-heartedly. From what is known of the matter one cannot tell how far the girl fell in with Gissing's designs for her or how sincerely. What is certain is that money was required for the endeavour and that Gissing had practically none. We are all familiar, alas, with the fanatical humanitarian who is so sure of the excellence and transcendent importance of his ends that he will not hesitate even at murder to achieve them. Two million men and women murdered in Russia testify to the brutal strength of humanitarian zeal when it is once fairly aroused. In Gissing's case, fortunately, murder was not the outcome; but the youth did take to petty thieving from fellow-students, and was caught, convicted, and imprisoned.

When he was released, Gissing could not return to Owens College, nor could he enter any other institution of learning in England. A new start, upon some quite different kind of life, had to be made. Several citizens of Manchester, recognizing that this was no ordinary case of dishonesty, attempted to give aid, and after the failure of one experiment raised money with which Gissing sailed for the United States, to try his fortune in wholly new surroundings. That experiment also failed, and after twelve months he returned to England, sought out the girl who had altered the whole course and character of his life, and married her. It was under these circumstances that he came to London, in October, 1877, to take up the career of a novelist and man of letters. He had no money, no connections, and no capacity for bringing himself into notice. He had written some short stories or sketches in the United States, and had sold them; but they showed no promise, and it is exceedingly difficult to believe that even a very youthful writer could have thought them a foundation for a literary career. His motives for marrying were doubtless mixed, but certainly amongst them was a persisting confidence that he could "save" the girl, and, no less certainly, an acute need for intimate and sympathetic companionship – a need which Gissing felt with unabated insistence as long as he lived, without being able to satisfy it save during the last six years of his existence. For this first marriage turned out exactly as any one could have told him it was most likely to, and as one or two people did try to tell him it would. Within a year or thereabouts his wife became a confirmed drunkard, and when she wanted money that Gising did not have she returned to her former trade. She thus left Gissing several times, and came back repentant when she was reduced to the point of not even having a place in which to sleep. By 1880 a definite and final separation had taken place; but Gissing contributed to her support an amount that was large in terms of his income until her death in 1888.

It is unnecessary for my present purpose to tell even briefly the remainder of Gissing's personal history. This is not without poignant interest,* but the crucial events just recounted are the foundation of all that Gissing became, and to them we owe his novels. Until the moment when he was placed under arrest he had been headed towards an academic career, which promised to be brilliant but which certainly would have been conventional. What is known about him suggests irresistibly that he never would have realized himself, never would have become thoroughly awake, and able to grow, had he not been plunged into a sea of horrors and left to sink or swim. The notion that the artist is the better for living a Bohemian life is the degeneration of a profound truth. A number of rebellious and visionary young creatures — and with them some others old enough to know better — have been attempting in recent years to persuade us that everybody ought to live creatively, by which they mean in plainer language impulsively, following courses severely reprehended by those who hate anarchy, both within the individual and within society. At the same time a number of critics have been writing as if they believed that a man cannot be a good artist if he does not live the life of a sober and conventional citizen. It would be a blessing if we could all take to heart the story of Jack Sprat and his wife.

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* The whole story is told in the Introduction to my edition of *Workers in the Dawn* (2 vols., 1935). Very few, I may add, have ever seen this novel, because it has not hitherto been reprinted and because copies of the original edition are so extremely scarce that one in good condition usually brings a price above $500.00.

It is not that what is one man's meat is another man's poison, cruelly true though this may be on occasion; — it is that some men cannot learn that poison really is poison without tasting it and actually feeling for themselves its deadliness. Most of these unfortunate beings pay the extreme penalty for their headstrong defiance of sense; but to the few who survive humanity owes much, because from amongst them have come great poets, great artists, great teachers. When I speak of Jack Sprat and his wife I do not mean — need I say? — that we should endeavour to bring in chaos. Well-nigh every good thing which earthly life affords is conditioned by the maintenance of social order and of personal integrity and of respect for tradition. But this itself means that we are not all alike in talent, strength, pertinacity, imagination, feeling, intellect, just as we are not in appearance – else "order", which implies diversity, would be a meaningless word. The conventional and exemplary citizen, backbone of society though he truly is, cannot also be its head and heart; nor can the heart or head be at the same time the backbone. The rebels and critics whom I have cited are both, then, absurdly in the wrong of it. I am here concerned only with "creativeness"; and clearly no social or other changes are ever going to enable us all to live creatively, any more than they are going to make every man a king – *nor, if we had the slightest notion what we were talking of, could we for a moment wish it.* To become creative in any significant way is not a small or light thing. It requires something more and other than freedom to play about irresponsibly in the sunshine. Though we rebel against the structure of life blindly and hotly, we never contrive to escape the fact that for everything we do or become a price is exacted. No man ever born would knowingly choose the life Gissing made for himself – through long years a life of exile and slow torture – yet nothing less or easier would have brought out all his creative powers or would have truly humanized him.

The consequence of suffering was a group of novels which despite their imperfections and limitations have a fundamental genuineness and strength, a downright honesty and a quality of thoughtfulness, lifting them high above the general run of fiction, and stamping them as the work of a man authentically acquainted, not with the mere surface of existence, but with its inward realities and the dark springs of feeling and of action. It seems to be widely held nowadays that art – and indeed nearly everything else – is a matter of technique. Gissing is only one of many artists who, in painting, in sculpture, in poetry, as well as in fiction prove that honesty and insight and a desperate concern for the first and last things of life is a surer passport to enduring vitality than the most highly finished technique. *The Unclassed*, *Thyrza*, *The Nether World*, *New Grub Street*, *Born in Exile*, and *The Whirlpool* – to name only the half-dozen which most strongly impress one reader – are extraordinary in their sombre human truth, in their touches of real and human, not fanciful or transcendent beauty, and in their true inwardness. To miss them is to miss the dramatic testimony of a man whose contact with reality was more genuine and more important, despite all restrictions, than that of any others in his generation in English-speaking lands.

Gissing's novels, besides, into which he put so much not only of himself but of his own life's story, enable us as we share his experience to follow his growth through experience; – and this in itself, it is time to recognize, is a great thing. When Gissing was swept from his moorings he was only carried out to sea in a more spectacular and painful fashion than large numbers in his day and even larger numbers in ours. Awakened by overt disaster, confronted with the elemental face of things, compelled to struggle for bare existence, Gissing had to re-orient himself. Like the majority of us, he was dazzled by "the progress of knowledge" and outraged by the progress of industrialism. Perhaps inevitably, he was first impelled to eat more of the cake that had poisoned him. He listened eagerly to the plausible arguments of those who looked forward and proposed to assist in, and hasten, the processes of evolutionary change. He cast off whatever shreds of Christianity there may have been clinging to him and became a militant "rationalist"; – became also a positivist, a socialist, a communist, while "his heart burned with wrath and envy of 'the privileged classes' ". He mounted the soap-box and harangued the mob while at the same time he put his shoulder to the less exciting and more difficult task of trying to educate working people and of forming amongst them organized centres of class-consciousness and of resistance to oppression. This occurred when he was about twenty – and the consequence was that as he actually tested the dogma of natural goodness and the religion of humanity and the doctrinaire social and educational programmes then more novel but still today prevalent, as he actually lived and worked with and for those who were to possess the earth in the coming better time, he was gradually constrained, to his own dismay, in his own despite, to turn off, first from one *-ism*, then from another, because fact was too palpably opposed to theory. The instance in his own home was only one instance, but, while it remained unique in painfulness, it came to seem typical of all that met the open eye throughout London, slowly but unescapably enforcing the conclusion recorded in *The Private Papers*:

> I have known revolt against the privilege of wealth (can I not remember spots in London where I have stood, savage with misery, looking at the prosperous folk who passed?), but I could never feel myself at one with the

native poor among whom I dwelt. And for the simplest reason: I came to know them too well. He who cultivates his enthusiasm amid graces and comforts may nourish an illusion with regard to the world below him all his life long, and I do not deny that he may be the better for it; for me, no illusion was possible. I knew the poor, and I knew that their aims were not mine. I knew that the kind of life (such a modest life!) which I should have accepted as little short of the ideal, would have been to them — if they could have been made to understand it — a weariness and a contempt. To ally myself with them against the "upper world" would have been mere dishonesty, or sheer despair. What they at heart desired, was to me barren; what I coveted, was to them for ever incomprehensible.

Gissing at the end was nothing if not modest and unpretentious. As we have seen above from another passage in *The Private Papers*, he hated plutocracy; and it was not for that that he turned from socialism. It was because he could not in honesty avoid the conclusion, as he wrote in a novel published in 1889, "that the differences between the nether and the upper world are purely superficial". He could not remain a humanitarian because he came to know the objects of humanitarian effort too well, because it was forced in upon him that humanitarianism is founded upon illusion, because he discovered that modern secular communism is identical in spirit and aim and real character with modern plutocracy. He did not, however, turn against socialism with the fury of the renegade; he did not even presume to declare that no good could come from cherishing illusions; he knew only that for himself deception was impossible, and that he must undertake again the search for anchorage.

Where he finally stood, and the personal fulfillment which came with his progress through, and beyond, the maze of new nineteenth-century knowledge and new constructive thinking, we have seen; and we can see better than he could the meaning of his changes. As he looked back upon it, and thought of all his mistakes and wanderings and discoveries made too late, he was tempted to conclude that his life had been "merely tentative, a broken series of false starts and hopeless new beginnings"—and this accounts for the self-condemnation in the letter from which I have quoted, wherein Gissing anticipated the verdicts of such blind self-absorbed "friends" as Mr. Wells. It is one of the penalties of growth that as a man alters he must look back upon his earlier self and work with distaste, condemning both for their immaturity, their superficiality, or their wrongheadedness. We, however, can easily trace a pattern in Gissing's life and work, and in proportion as we follow it out are bound to recognize there a true development, its stages not arbitrary or unrelated, but leading one to another, and culminating in the formation of a mature and fully humanized man.

Doubtless none of those who are so disastrously busy with their plans for the overturning and remaking of human nature and society could be induced by Gissing's example to pause and open their eyes. In the face of their impregnable self-confidence to hope for that would be a childish folly. Nevertheless, there is today, and there is likely long to be, a challenging pertinence, and a lesson, in the life of this "poor little mortal" for men who do not want to find life a hollow sham or a cruel mockery.

REVIEWS

A Civilization of Small Men*

DISCURSIVE and shapeless as it is, Ford Madox Ford's *Provence* is richly rewarding to those who seek evidence of traditionalist Europe in the act of reasserting her claims upon modern man: for behind a tumbled and fascinating mass of historical notes, hints to civilized travelers, gastronomic manifestos, anecdotes literary and artistic, criticisms of music and painting and books, reminiscences of New York and London and Paris and Tarascon, Mr. Ford makes reasonably clear a philosophy of civilization which has much in common with that of most of the contributors to THE AMERICAN REVIEW. Provence — that ancient triangle of modern France which lies between the Rhone, the Alps, and the Mediterranean — is for Mr. Ford at once "the cradle and the conduit of that humane, Romance Latinity that alone can preserve from putridity our staggering civilization and world". And his confessed object is "to point out to this world what will happen to it if it does not take Provence of the XIII century for its model".

It is hardly fair to Mr. Ford's book to discuss it entirely from the point of view of its relation to a movement attempting to recreate in modern terms what Mr. Ford so aptly calls "the frame of mind that was

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* PROVENCE: From Minstrels to the Machine *by Ford Madox Ford* (LIPPINCOTT. 359 pp. $3.00).

Provence". But there is space here only to state briefly that the book as a whole represents Mr. Ford at his discursive best: his comments on scores of subjects unrelated to the immediate woes of the world are sound and stimulating; his allusions, learned or light-hearted, are unfailingly human and savoury; and his style is as supple and rich as ever – if in this instance, perhaps not unnaturally, a trifle on the Latin side. It is *Provence* as a case-record of the present reaction in favour of the central traditions of Western civilization which will here be discussed.

Mr. Ford begins with the contention that during the 2500 years when the villages and countryside of Provence have been harried by a long succession of conquerors and plunderers, she nevertheless "evolved two magnificent literary traditions, an architecture unsurpassed in even Italy, a number of beautiful and humane schools of religious thought, and a local civilization that, if we except that of Periclean Athens, has been the only real civilization that the world has yet seen". That such a civilization should have been not only evolved but to a surprising degree maintained to this day requires explanation: it lies in the "Provençal frame of mind": the frame of mind which encourages small farmers and small tradesmen to rule economics, uses liberty-based-on-property to combat injustice, has a healthy and natural respect for artists, craftsmen, and poets, and assigns supreme importance to local things. Not pretending to any considered views on politics and economics, Mr. Ford does not know precisely how this frame of mind can be made predominant in the modern world: but he recognizes it in Provence, knows it to be the only thing worth fighting for among the issues of this world, and sees that the Provençaux have defended it against its enemies with that unswerving devotion which comes of an insight into the true essence of civilization. (The "attempt at standardization" in Provence, he writes, was "foiled by secret tenacities — by the bakers, the barbers, the blacksmiths, the curriers, the gardener's and peasant's sons who kept alive the subterraneous flames of the poetry, the crafts, the pacifisms, the dangerous sports, the theatrical entertainments, and the great passion for the beloved earth".) And he does not question who its enemies are: he speaks of "the rag-heap of confused philosophies and ignoble preparations for butchery that is our civilization today"; he has no doubt that, symbolically speaking, it is "motor-cultivation in the hands of the financier" that has ruined the modern world.

> I do not suppose [he writes] that we shall ever get rid of — or even that it would be desirable entirely to get rid of — the machine. I do not suppose that we shall ever not have War with us, or rid ourselves entirely . . . of Science or even of Law. . . . But all these things must — they will inevitably — be made little. They will be reduced to their proper status either because the armament firms and scientists will blot out almost the entire populations of the world, leaving here and there mere pockets of men. Or else by a change of heart in humanity. . . . The glorification of Mass must disappear. You will talk of the largest pumpkin in the village as a glory, not of the largest armament factory in the world. . . .

All this — and much more like it — is very close to good Agrarian-Distributist doctrine, which is all the more impressive because it has grown not out of economic and political speculation, not out of embittered reaction to the Near-Servile State, but out of simple observation of the high quality of life which a tenaciously distributist civilization even today can produce. At a dozen points in the book Mr. Ford propounds highly debatable beliefs, but the essential doctrine, with its supporting evidence, is always there. He has built up – to take the worst example – a sort of Meridional Mysticism which is as extreme in its own way as the Nordic Mysticism of Hitler, whom he hates: for him the North is the place from whence comes all evil – including Brussels Sprouts. Were it not for this aberration, Mr. Ford would perhaps be more inclined to see the Nazi movement in Germany, like Fascism in Italy, for what it clearly is: impressive evidence of the often exaggerated but extremely significant reaction of the genuine European, vaguely conscious of his central traditions, against the cultural heresies that the post-Renaissance period has imposed upon him. Because of a similar unbalance, Mr. Ford can see no help from the Churches: for him "Christianity as a faith died a few days after the 4th of August, 1914", when the Churches took arms and went to war – a judgement that is borne out neither by the experience of Christendom after previous conflicts nor by the renewed vitality of at least the more traditional Churches today. But in spite of such divergences from reality, *Provence*, in addition to its general merits, is a genuine and valuable addition to the steadily increasing Distributist-Agrarian library. Such a judgement does not need the support of the fact that the book is dedicated, for cause, to Allen Tate, one of the most effective spokesmen of this school. It is sufficiently borne out by Mr. Ford's own stated objective: "*I don't want our* [*modern*] *civilization to pull through. I want a civilization of small men each labouring two small plots – his own ground and his own soul.*"

MARVIN MCCORD LOWES

A Study of Paul Elmer More*

LIKE many other competent judges, Mr. Shafer regards Mr. More as "the most significant figure among American writers today", and he has accordingly done him the deserved honour of devoting an able book to an analysis and criticism of the growth of his mind. Probably this is Mr. Shafer's most important contribution: by the genetic approach he has shown Mr. More's development from his native Calvinism through German romanticism, evolutionary rationalism, and a rejection of Christianity, to Hindu self-annihilation, Socratic self-fulfillment, and finally authoritarian supernaturalism. The "experimental" character of his development should be noted. Mr. More has not been a static thinker, and when one claims agreement with his position, it is essential to indicate *which* position is meant. From another angle, one might say that he has gone from one extreme to another, unlike his friend Mr. Babbitt. From an early Romantic extreme which involved a good deal of sentimentality, he has gone *through* Socratic humanism, applied in most of the Shelburne essays, akin to Mr. Babbitt's, to an opposite extreme of supernaturalism.

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* PAUL ELMER MORE AND AMERICAN CRITICISM *by Robert Shafer* (YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS. 325 pp. $4.00).

The book is much more than a mere summary and exposition of another man's utterances. Mr. Shafer includes much trenchant comment of his own on contemporary tendencies and on Mr. More; his discussions involving such matters as nineteenth-century scientific assumptions and the Greek tradition are particularly valuable. Although Mr. Shafer obviously respects Mr. More profoundly, he does not claim that "Mr. More's standards cannot be improved or that his use of them has been flawless", and he is able to write with considerable detachment. Mr. More is so exceedingly erudite and he deals with such profound problems that he is fortunate in having as an interpreter and critic one of the most acute and learned of modern scholars in command of a crisp and lucid style. Mr. Shafer's analysis of Mr. More's social and political views, which have repelled many earnest social thinkers, particularly as distorted and misrepresented by Mr. Van Wyck Brooks, is of particular interest. One wishes, however, that Mr. Shafer had done a bit more to place these views in their historical context in relation to classical ideas, to Burke, and to American Federalists such as John Adams, Cooper the social critic, Lowell, and Henry James. Mr. Shafer is particularly felicitous in discussing the protean implications of Mr. More's dualistic criteria and the original manner in which he applies them so as to elicit something relatively fresh in each author he approaches.

Mr. Shafer has chosen to approach Mr. More through modern critics such as Spingarn, Mencken, Lewisohn, Van Wyck Brooks, Edmund Wilson, John Jay Chapman, and T. S. Eliot, in accordance with the second half of his title. Of course this is readily justifiable, and much that Mr. Shafer says about these critics in comparison with Mr. More is certainly beyond debate by any courageous and candid judge. Nevertheless, one somehow has a feeling that in such a company Mr. More wins too easy a victory, and the approach also has the result of involving a good deal of acerbity which occasionally makes certain passages somewhat disagreeable reading. No doubt T. S. Eliot is often absurdly overrated, and Mr. Brownell had his short-comings, but it seems at times as if Mr. Shafer went out of his way for the sole purpose of belittling them.

Perhaps I express merely a personal preference, and I would not wish in any way to seem ungrateful for the great service Mr. Shafer has rendered contemporary criticism by his courageous and forthright exposure of the fallacies and inadequacies of many who today masquerade as critics when they are actually concerned not with an appraisal of values with reference to the unity of an objective tradition (the critic's true business) but merely with the exhibition of subjective likes and dislikes or with interpreting the degree of an author's approximation of his own subjective aims—as if one were to praise a rotten apple because its rottenness is perfectly achieved! Nevertheless, I cannot help wishing, considering Mr. Shafer's own knowledge of academic scholarship, that he had approached Mr. More's essays on major authors less through modern impressionists and expressionists and more through the conclusions regarding the subjects of Mr. More's essays reached by historical scholars, by the recognized academic masters of these subjects.

Of course academic scholars are technically concerned essentially not with evaluating authors, but with their historical explanation and interpretation. Yet as Mr. Shafer shows, evaluation is almost inescapably implicit in any comment on books. And in actual practice most historical scholars do not hesitate to allow their appraisals to be clearly apparent. I should like to know, for example, what the result would be if one compared the conclusions reached by Mr. More and Mr. K. B. Murdock on Puritan literature; by Mr. More and Mr. Austin Warren on Pope; by Mr. More and Mr. Randall Stewart on Hawthorne; by Mr. More and Mr. Odell Shepard on Longfellow; by Mr. More and Mr. Oliver Firkins on Emerson; by Mr. More and Mr. Hardin Craig on Poe; by Mr. More and Mr. B. V. Crawford on Thoreau; by Mr. More and Mr. J. H. Hanford on Milton; by Mr. More and Mr. Gingerich on Wordsworth. I am by no means sure that Mr. More would have all the advantage, although on none of the numerous men and periods it has fallen to him as an essayist to discuss, has he failed to offer many striking and sound suggestions. It may be that such a comparison would suggest that Mr. More's actual distinctive superiority lies not so much in any weighty contribution to the understanding or criticism of individual authors as in, first, the impressive spectacle he presents of a cultivated mind approaching a vast gallery of authors of many ages from the unifying standpoint of one pattern of critical criteria; and second, in his native ability to transmute criticism into literature of rare value in its own right through the virtues of a *style* of singular charm and felicity.

With the first distinction Mr. Shafer has dealt at generous length; with the second, however, which surely deserves a substantial analytical chapter, he has dealt scarcely at all. Perhaps he felt that such treatment would be out of keeping with Mr. More's own organic view of style as essentially a by-product of one's mental and spiritual health. There are many, however, who, while they cannot accept all of Mr. More's conclusions and who reluctantly find his essays on some individual authors inferior to those by academic authorities, heartily agree that Mr. More's work is of the first importance, and that it will endure by virtue of his gift of style. Therefore, since his style may turn out to be his chief resource in his conflict with oblivion, it would seem deserving of close analysis as a means of determining precisely where its haunting charm lies. One would like to see Mr. More's style analyzed and its secret revealed as Oliver Elton analyzed Ruskin's style and John Freeman analyzed Melville's style.

Some readers will regret that Mr. Shafer did not include a bibliography; he has presented full excerpts, however, from nine "criticisms" as a means of illustrating the extent to which Mr. More has been misrepresented and maligned by professed exponents of humanitarian sympathy and of criticism as interpretation in the sympathetic light of a man's own aims. Professor Shafer's scholarly and vigorous book fills a distinct need, and it ought to stimulate discussion not only about the greatest living critic but about the issues so vital to civilization which are the constant themes of his work.

HARRY HAYDEN CLARK

An Anti-Intellectual Idealist*

NICHOLAS BERDYAEV, to whom attention has been called in The American Review on several occasions, is one of the most interesting figures in the post-War world. His position as a rather heterodox member of the Orthodox Church, who was expelled from Russia in 1922 after holding a professorial chair in Moscow under the Bolshevist régime and has since that time written and taught extensively in Berlin and Paris as a leading critic of Marxism – a political faith he formerly professed – has deservedly made him a focus of attention and has given him a wider audience for the philosophy of life he has gradually developed.

This philosophy has been only partially revealed in the half-dozen of his works that have been translated into English, and even then not quite representatively. As a result, he has come to be known as an anti-Marxist and has thus won the acclaim of many who would dissent from the anti-intellectualism and anti-institutionalism that his later works are making manifest. Hence the translation of *Freedom and The Spirit* may be welcomed as giving us a clearer and more complete picture of Berdyaev's vision than we have hitherto received. "Vision" is the proper word, since Berdyaev is of the true order of visionaries or prophets of the type peculiar to the land of Tolstoi. This is

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*FREEDOM AND THE SPIRIT *by Nicholas Berdyaev, translated by Oliver Fielding Clarke* (SCRIBNER'S. 362 pp. $3.75).
THE FATE OF MAN IN THE MODERN WORLD *by Nicholas Berdyaev, translated by Donald A. Lowrie* (MOREHOUSE PUBLISHING COMPANY. 120 pp. $1.25).

not to say that the Berdyaev vision is not original and of independent value.

In the introduction to the book he sets forth his viewpoint, which is frankly anti-intellectualist. Indeed, the very first sentence of the book is this striking pronouncement: "We have lost all confidence in the possibility and fruitfulness of an abstract metaphysic." He calls himself a Christian theosophist and tells us that in his discussion of freedom and the spirit he passes beyond the limits of the philosophical, theological, and mystical knowledge so dear to the Western mind as well in Catholic and Protestant circles as in the sphere of academic philosophy. He indicates the scope of his book as being at one and the same time the solution of his own spiritual problems and the awakening of the conscience of other men:

> I restate the problems that trouble me in a form which, though affirmative, in a measure conceals them. I put my problems in the form of affirmations. But my thought as it moves within my own being is that of a man who, without being a sceptic, is putting problems. I must discover for myself that which God has hidden from me.
>
> All the forces of my spirit and of my mental and moral consciousness are bent towards the complete understanding of the problems that press so hard on me. But my object is not so much to give them a systematic answer, as to put them more forcibly before the Christian conscience.

In the elaboration of this inquiry he has written a book which *ex professo* is neither theological nor philosophical as to its terminology. "It is a book of what may be called 'free philosophy', written in the spirit of a free religious philosophy and Gnosis."

In his opening chapter Berdyaev rejects all abstract metaphysic in favour of what he calls a philosophy or a phenomenology of the spiritual life. The primary antithesis is not between spirit and matter, it seems, but between spirit and nature, between life and thing, between liberty and necessity, between creative movement and passive submission to exterior impulses.

> Spirit is not a substance, an objective reality, in the same sense as other substances. Spirit is life, experience, destiny and not an object, and can only be known in concrete experience, in an experience, that is, of spiritual life.

Now spiritual life, he tells us, is the awakening and the manifestation of the soul, the acquiring of kinship with being, a victory over heterogeneity and extrinsicism. It is a symbolic life, uniting two spheres, God and the world. Within it there are no abstractions or abstract principles; there is, simply and solely, life. "Beings, and not substances, are revealed in the spiritual life, and the Christian revelation is the revelation of the spiritual life of being."

Thus we are prepared for the statement at the end of the first chapter that the Platonic tradition is more favourable to the philosophy of the spirit and the spiritual life than the Aristotelian. Mediaeval scholasticism, being based on the teachings of Aristotle, has led our traditional Christianity far from the true knowledge of spirit, it seems:

> The Aristotelian conception of God as *actus purus* deprives God of that interior active life and transforms Him into a lifeless object. God is left without power, that is to say, He is no longer the source of life and movement.

It is vain for Thomism to distinguish between the natural and the supernatural, for it is enslaved to a naturalist metaphysic of divinity.

When we seek the author's meaning of freedom, we are told that freedom is the whole atmosphere of the spiritual life, that the problem of the freedom of the spirit cannot be solved by a rationalist philosophy, that it is impossible to elaborate a logical and positive concept of freedom, for "freedom is not a rigid and static category, it is the inner dynamic of the spirit, the irrational mystery of being, of life, and of destiny". It is in freedom that the inward activity of all life is made perceptible, we are told. "The experience of freedom is known to every being possessed of spiritual life."

Although the idea of freedom is one of the leading ideas of Christianity, Christian thinkers introduced an antithesis between freedom and grace which the author rejects as false and vicious. Augustine of Hippo depreciated freedom and "St. Thomas Aquinas also completely rejected freedom, for which his scholasticism leaves him no place since love of God is for him a necessity". In Pelagianism, in St. Augustine, in Jansenism, and in Calvinism, the author sees examples of how Christianity itself has been led into error by rationalist evaluations of freedom.

Yet Berdyaev is not without hope for the future, when Christian men will enter into their spiritual heritage of freedom and when "the Church of Christ will defend the freedom of man against the violence of the kingdom of this world":

> The idea of Christian freedom presupposes the affirmation of freedom in all spheres of human creativity, in

science, philosophy, and art, in social relationships, and in love. Coercion in these matters has no value whatever from the Christian point of view. No outward limitations can be imposed on freedom of thought and feeling. The life of Christ must be born within them. This is the line of development, through immanence, the only one which humanity can follow, which has brought it to the very climax of the trials and contradictions of culture.

In somewhat diluted form the same anti-intellectualist idealism informs *The Fate of Man in the Modern World*. This book is a judgement on history and especially on Christianity in history. We are at the end of an era. We live in an inhuman world, inhuman in principle as in fact. "Over against man there rises a class or a race, a deified collective or state. Over against the inhumanity of modern nationalism stands that of modern communism. The rights of man and of the citizen have been completely discredited."

The author's judgement on Christianity in history touches "the false theophanies, the false sanctification of the natural and the historical". He finds fault with Christian asceticism, with Christian teaching on sex and marriage, with "the stifling rationalization of Christian truths". He calls for a new Christian piety to re-humanize man and society, culture and the world. "But for Christianity this process of humanization is something not merely human; it is divine-human, of the nature of the God-man. Only in the divine-humanity, in the Body of Christ, can man be saved."

In criticism of the two books, and especially of the anti-intellectualist position taken up in the larger volume, it is enough to recall the verdict given by a certain popular writer: "Modern religion bases its knowledge of God entirely upon experience. It has encountered God. It does not argue about God. It relates." The author offers no effective proofs of his sweeping assertions, no logical analysis of his concept of spirit, no truly philosophical explanation of his idea of freedom. His failure to interpret rightly the Aristotelian *actus purus*, his denial of the value of Aristotle's notion of potentiality, his repudiation of the scholastic epistemology, his rejection of the distinction between the natural and the supernatural in favour of his own dichotomy of spirit and nature, his vision of the God-man of the future, his expectation of a transfiguration of the world – all this is characteristic of the philosophical lyricism of our day, a modern mode of thought which contributes little to the sphere of the problematics of action even in the rare cases where it succeeds in making itself intelligible to the ordinary mind.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar*

SOME critics may, no doubt, judge adversely Mr. Cate's biography of L. Q. C. Lamar. His faulty use of material, his neglect of certain manuscript collections, and his heavy reliance upon Maye's *Life and Times of L. Q. C. Lamar* for information which he might have obtained at first hand will be sufficient, if a narrow view be taken, to obscure the merit of the work. On the other hand, if one takes a broader view of the book, seeks to separate the essential from the unessential and goes to the basic principles, he will be forcibly impressed with the insight and balance with which the author has presented the historical background; and he will be convinced of the authenticity of the portrayal of Lamar's character and of that of many of his contemporaries. Finally, he will feel that the author has, in an unobtrusive way, managed to write an extremely interesting biography. The book is fundamentally sound. In fact, Mr. Cate's book deserves a wide audience, because he has rescued from partial oblivion one of the few truly great men of American history.

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*LUCIUS Q. C. LAMAR *by Wirt Armistead Cate* (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS. $5.00).

Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar was born in Georgia in 1825 of a famous family. His father, of the same name, who took his life while still young, was a brilliant jurist; Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, one of the leaders in the Texas revolution and the second President of the Republic of Texas, was his father's brother. He was a first cousin of Howell and W. R. Cobb, nephew and cousin of Absolem Chappell; in fact he was related by blood or marriage to most of the first families of Georgia, and to many in Virginia and Maryland. He married the exquisite Virginia Longstreet whose father was A. B. Longstreet, noted jurist, preacher, writer, President and Chancellor of Emory College, the University of Mississippi, and the University of South Carolina.

This high connection of L. Q. C. Lamar is an important factor in his public and private life; and it identifies him as a leading member of the slave oligarchy, upon which the study of his private and public life casts a flood of light. While Lamar was intellectual beyond most of his contemporaries, nevertheless the breadth of his education and of his interests gives some insight into the culture and education of the slave oligarchy and the professional classes of the South. Metaphysics, logic, psychology, ethics, law, theology, history, political economy, the classics, English and Continental literature were fields in which Lamar laboured seriously all his life. At one time or another he taught philosophy, psychology, and law at the University of Mississippi and could have taught the other subjects mentioned. An examination of the intellectual interests of other members of the slave oligarchy and professional classes will disclose in a vast number of cases a similar mental discipline.

Out of this background one might be led (it has been done) to expect arrogance and a passion for dominion over others; but, as a matter of fact, excepting his belief in the righteousness of Negro slavery, which he, like other Southerners, regarded as a God-given institution, he was modest and democratic. Lamar's devotion to constitutional republican government and human liberty was as deep as that of Thomas Jefferson. Upholding slavery and freedom was no paradox to Lamar and the South. The explanation involves no sophistry; it was based upon human realities; the Greek or Roman concept of liberty was closely kin to that of the Southerners.

Lamar immigrated to Mississippi about 1850 when his father-in-law, Judge A. B. Longstreet, became Chancellor of the State University. He farmed, taught law and metaphysics, and served in Congress in the years just preceding the Civil War. When he entered Congress at the age of thirty-two Lamar immediately attracted national attention by his oratory and masterful logic. He was one of the foremost leaders in the secession movement; he drafted the ordinance of secession for Mississippi and proposed that a Confederacy of the Southern States be set up in which the Consitution and laws of the United States be adopted *without a single change.* Lamar gained for himself—as all Southern leaders did who advocated secession—the epithet of "Fire Eater"; yet a careful scrutiny of this man's life reveals one of the sanest and most judicious minds and temperaments in American history. I can think of no public character in our history whose thoughts on affairs of state were less coloured or directed by prejudice or emotion than were the thoughts of L. Q. C. Lamar; and this does not except Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, Marshall, the Adams's, or Lincoln. This observation should throw light upon the whole category of "Fire Eaters", who were essentially reactionary or conservative in principle; and most of whom were men of average Anglo-Saxon reserve and self-discipline. In fact a study of the speeches of the leaders and of the newspaper editorials of the North and South, respectively, during the five years preceding the Civil War (this study has been made by Northern historians) reverses the picture. Few "Fire Eaters" by temperament or principle can be found to match the uncontrolled passion of the Radical Republicans and Abolitionist leaders, or of the New York *Tribune* and the Chicago *Tribune.*

Lamar and twelve other kinsmen of his name, mostly from Georgia, served in the Confederate Army with rank not lower than Lieutenant Colonel. Seven —including Lamar's two brilliant young brothers—

were killed; while scores of other relatives, including the able W. R. R. Cobb, died in the war—casualties typical of the oligarchy. After a year's service in the Confederate Army Lamar was sent to Europe as a diplomatic agent, with instructions to proceed to the Court of St. Petersburg at the proper moment (which never arrived). Henry Adams was so impressed with Lamar that he wrote many years later that had this brilliant young Confederate been sent to England in J. M. Mason's place, he would have carried the English people with him by his eloquence and logic and would have gained recognition for the Confederacy. While this is hardly true, it does furnish strong testimony of Lamar's transcendent ability. I am, however, willing to venture this: that had Lamar been made President of the Confederacy instead of the punctilious and irritable Davis, such military chieftains as Joe Johnston, Beauregard, and Bedford Forrest would never have been deprived of their commands and permitted to sulk in their tents; and the narrowly patriotic Joe Brown and Zeb Vance would have been conciliated and brought into greater cooperation with the Confederate Government.

When the Confederacy was overthrown, Lamar—like R. E. Lee and most other responsible leaders—counselled the Southern people to accept the situation in good faith, which they undoubtedly did. But Lamar in common with the same leaders regarded the establishment of Negro and carpet-bag governments over the South in 1867-8, supported by Federal bayonets often wielded by Negro troops, as a betrayal of the soldiers' faith plighted at Appomattox and elsewhere, and a repudiation of the principles of free government for which, the North had said, the war had been fought. Nor is there much doubt that by 1872 the majority of Southern leaders and people were fearfully balancing in their secret thoughts the consequences of another revolution fought by desperate guerilla bands as against the consequences of a continued submission to Africanization and spoliation sanctioned by the executive, legislative, judicial, and military arms of the Federal Government. No Southern white person—man, woman, or child—could be sure of Federal protection until 1879. On the other hand the feeling was universal that the strong arm of the United States Government, controlled by the Radical Republican Party, was always ready to reach into the remotest corner of the South and crush anyone whom the whims or political needs or greed of the Radicals deemed it expedient to crush. Had not some of the upper Southern states been able to regain home rule and rid themselves of carpet-bag and Negro rule by 1872, and thereby hold out some dim hope to the lower South, it seems highly probable that one of the bloodiest and most desperate revolutions of all history would have taken place before the end of Grant's second administration.

That L. Q. C. Lamar was contemplating the raising of such a desperate revolt was the opinion of his own household at this time, who watched him fearfully and narrowly while he sat silent and impassive upon his porch at Oxford and saw Negroes, often armed, shove white women and children from the walks. Lamar and other potential leaders of a new revolution had their hopes of peaceably escaping carpet-bag-Negro rule roused by the overthrow of radical

Negro governments in Virginia, Georgia, and Tennessee; and they put out of mind the resort to violence. Lamar in particular, ably seconded by J. B. Gordon and Ben Hill of Georgia, conceived of a strategy by which self-government might be won for the Southern states. They would divide the enemy in the South and recruit allies from his ranks. The North was already divided between the Democrats and Conservative Republicans on the one hand and the Radicals on the other in the matter of Southern policy. This division must be accentuated, and allies recruited from the Radical ranks.

Lamar's first step in 1872 was to run for Congress in Mississippi, which was still in the hands of the Negroes, carpet-baggers, and Federal troops. He urged all white men to vote the Democratic ticket; but at the same time urged the Negroes also to support the Democratic ticket and denounced the radical policy of *drawing the colour line*, by which the two races were pitted against one another. Lamar was overwhelmingly elected despite Federal bayonets and carpet-bag-Negro election boards.

He had not been in Congress long when the second stage of his grand strategy was reached. On March 28th, 1874 the aged Charles Sumner died, politically discredited and isolated by the Grant administration. Lamar had great respect for Sumner's culture and learning; he believed in his genuine devotion to free government; and in his sincerity in his crusade against the South and slavery. In short, while Lamar agreed with much of Sumner's principles and disagreed with more, he respected the Old Crusader's integrity, and that of thousands of his followers. It must not be forgotten that Lamar was, like Lee, a man without vindictiveness and practically without prejudice, so when he rose in the house on April 27th and delivered an oration in honour of the recently deceased Sumner he spoke with complete sincerity. It was one of the most powerful perorations ever delivered in House or Senate, comparable to Webster's 7th of March speech which postponed the Civil War ten years. The theme was sectional reconciliation. "Know one another and you will love one another," resounded through the land. Congressmen and Senators broke down and wept; even the hard-boiled and unscrupulous Blaine wept. The Country wept. Unrepentant secessionist, life-long champion of Jefferson Davis and the Confederacy though he was, few questioned Lamar's sincerity—few ever questioned the rightness of this man of complete integrity. Yet it was the most deadly blow thus far struck against the Radical Republican control of the Federal and state governments. It was the blast of the trumpet which caused the walls of Jericho to crack. The Radical Southern policy had been tolerated because a majority of Northern people had been convinced by their political leaders that the South had never accepted the decision of the war; that they were cruel and oppressive and were prevented from the wholesale slaughter and re-enslavement of the Negroes only by the ruthless preventive measures of the Federal government. In brief, the North had been led by propaganda to regard the members of the late slave oligarchy as monsters of treachery and cruelty. Lamar's eulogy of Charles Sumner undoubtedly shook the faith of millions of people in the truthfulness of this picture.

Lamar's great speech, some years later, against the payment of the war debt in "depreciated" silver or in greenbacks, went far toward laying the ghost of "Southern repudiation" of the Civil War debt, which had been constantly raised by the Radicals and marked another step in his grand strategy of convincing the Northern people of the sincerity of the South in accepting the results of the war. When Lamar and J. B. Gordon supported the electoral commission in 1879 to settle the Hayes-Tilden election dispute another stride was taken toward ending the Radical grip upon the Federal government and the South. These two ex-Confederates prevented another civil war which this time would not have been sectional, for the followers of Tilden in the North were ready to settle the dispute with violence; they were certain that the Radical Republican Party, which had become almost insensitive to public decency, had by fraud and the use of Federal troops in Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina robbed Tilden of the election. History upholds this conclusion. Lamar ably seconded by Gordon proposed that the matter be settled by a Congressional committee. The Republican Radicals refused to consider any of the evidence of fraud or violence, but by a party vote seated Hayes. Lamar urged the public to abide by the decision. This gained wide applause and confidence for him and it made it easy for him and General Gordon to exact a promise of Hayes that he would withdraw Federal troops from the South and bring to an end the rule of the carpetbag-Negro governments.

This promise was carried out—though with reluctance—and reconstruction technically ended in the

South. Lamar felt that his work had been accomplished. Partial reconciliation of the sections and self-government for the Southern States had been brought about.

But Lamar was soon to learn that the sword of Damocles had not been removed. Only by unremitting caution and self-discipline were Lamar and other Southern leaders enabled to push back and hold in leash the tide of passion so constantly stirred in the North by Blaine and the old Radical leaders. Another reconstruction threatened the South until the election and inauguration of Grover Cleveland in 1884 by the Democratic Party, which, despite the opprobrious epithets of "copperhead" and "rebel" applied to it by the Radical Republicans, was the only national party in America.

Cleveland thoroughly appreciated the great service of Lamar in the reconciliation of the sections. He regarded him as the ablest man in America and a person of complete integrity. He made him Secretary of the Interior and thereby ended the proscription which had been placed upon the South, for Lamar was the first Southerner to hold a cabinet position since the Administration of Buchanan. Lamar was one of the most successful administrators the department has had; he put an end—during his term of office—to the Indian frauds, land stealing, and pension graft which had been so much oil for the Radical Republican machine.

As a fitting end for the career of a man, who had he not been born a Southerner would probably have been president, Cleveland nominated Lamar Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. Though Republicans screamed that the Union was endangered in 1889 by the appointment of a Southerner to the Supreme Bench, three or four liberal Republican Senators voted for the ratification of Lamar's appointment, and for the first time in thirty or more years a Southerner became a Justice of the United States Supreme Court. In this capacity he served till his death in 1893.

As great a secessionist as Yancy or Rhett; as great a unionist as Daniel Webster; as magnanimous as Lincoln or Lee; as ready to fight on proper cause as Bedford Forrest and as judicious and poised as George Washington, Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar appears to us in the pages of Mr. Cate's fine biography as one of the most intriguing and distinguished figures in American history.

FRANK L. OWSLEY